

Design Review Manual
from Pioneer Valley Cohousing
- provided by Laura Fitch for CohoUS Webchat 2019

Manual for Design Review Projects and Homeowner Responsibilities

for
Pioneer Valley Cohousing Community
Amherst, MA

Fall 2015, revised Nov. 26, 2016, June 9 2017, Sept 12, 2017, October 9, 2018
To be reviewed in Fall 2018 (3 years)

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INTRODUCTION

In the spirit of living together with mutual respect and care for one another, homeowners and community members will work together on building and landscape design changes that impact the community.

Purpose of the Design Review Process

1. To protect the assets of the community as related to new construction and landscaping.
2. To ensure that the community is informed about potential design changes in a timely manner and through a transparent set of procedures.
3. To ensure that other circles have input on the design and process:
 - a. Buildings and Grounds: durability of structures and drainage
 - b. PALs: plant materials and drainage
 - c. Finance: impact on condominium and development fees
 - d. Care and Counsel: process and support of positive interpersonal relationships.
4. To ensure that adequate drawings are provided upon which a design can be fully understood, evaluated and built.
5. Recognizing that our community is not very accessible (for wheelchair use, aging in place, etc.), the Committee will look for and encourage opportunities to improve accessibility to houses, as applicable to specific project.

Design Review does not cover changes that are completely internal to a house envelope. However homeowners have responsibility to ensure that the building envelope is not compromised. See Appendix B for Additional Homeowner Responsibilities.

Criteria for Evaluating Changes to Buildings and Walkways

(see below for changes to trees and plantings)

In evaluating design proposals, the homeowner, community members, the Design Review Committee and designated circles will consider the following:

1. Compelling Rationale (see Appendix G)
2. Impact on adjoining exterior spaces, including drainage (PALs circle);
3. Impact on the landscape master plan (PALs Circle);
4. Impact on other community members (Care & Counsel Circle will provide support as needed);

5. Safety and light pollution considerations for exterior lighting;
6. Possible safety and accessibility improvements;
 - a. Avoid impediments and tripping hazards
 - b. Improve general access to homes and common house (e.g. level paths, ramps, etc.)
7. Aesthetic considerations: Discussions regarding aesthetics will balance community and individual preferences, while taking into consideration the following standards that have been established overtime:
 - a. Proportion and scale (e.g., vertical windows)
 - b. Modern windows without grills
 - c. Full glass front doors
 - d. Finishes (e.g., window and door trim)
 - e. Materials (e.g. horizontal siding, shingles)
8. Solar and “mini splits”: Minimize visual impact of exterior mechanical systems and their connections (e.g. pipes to solar systems, locations of exterior DX heat pumps and their pipes to interior units). Enclose new piping and paint to match exterior (if relevant and needed).
9. Regional considerations and weather-appropriate elements (Buildings & Grounds Circle):
 - a. Durability and suitability of materials,
 - b. Steep roofs, overhangs, solar orientation,
 - c. Flashings: all penetrations and intersections must be flashed for water proofing as per standard construction procedures. Examples: trim over holes for air conditioners and vent pipes, through wall sills for air conditioners, intersections of new roofs with existing walls, trim over windows, etc.
 - d. Type of trim: consider composite material rather than solid wood
 - e. Any wood trim shall be back primed before installation
 - f. Exterior finish of new siding, including priming end cuts
 - g. Painting above new porches, trellises: When homeowner installs something like a new porch, they should have the area above their porch painted at the same time if it needs it.
 - h. New Decking: consider composite wood/recycled plastic decking
10. Safety and potential building code considerations. Circles are not responsible for ensuring that all codes have been met, but will try to point out possible problems and recommend professional services when appropriate.

Criteria for Evaluating Changes to Trees and Planting

1. Compelling Rationale (see Appendix G)
2. Impact on the landscape and landscape master plan (PALs circle)
3. Specific to large trees (with mature height of 25 feet or more)

- a. New large trees within built environment (near buildings) shall be sized and located with consideration to future and existing solar systems, positive shade advantages, shade impact on gardens, pruning, future removal if diseased or otherwise needed.
- b. Existing large tree removals: consider input of community members and the following:
 - Aesthetics
 - Impact on shade reduction and cooling of houses and general area
 - Impact on existing homes (pruning, branches, solar systems, etc.)
 - Mitigation (can equivalent shade and others factors be recreated with new plantings?),
 - Payment for removal and any replacements

RESPONSIBILITIES

A respectful decision-making process often needs time. Homeowners agree to initiate the process early.

It also requires support from several areas. Please see “Appendix C - Possible Roles within Design Review Process” for responsibilities of support persons, facilitators, etc.

Participants at meetings will “listen for understanding.” Homeowners are encouraged to welcome the ideas and concerns of community members. Community members will work to understand and appreciate homeowners’ goals for change(s) to their home.

Design Review Committee Responsibilities

1. Provide a transparent process in which community members and homeowners can have a dialogue about ideas and concerns regarding a proposed design.
2. Aid community members in making design decisions regarding their property and neighbors proposals.
3. Aid in educating the community around design issues, construction, and maintenance issues.
4. Assist homeowners in conceptualizing and understanding design ideas and issues.

The Design Review Committee is not responsible for:

1. Information regarding Condo and Development Fee Updates,
2. Safety & Building Code Violations (e.g., dismantling or not installing fire/smoke detectors, “attic” development without legal emergency exit),
3. Construction techniques.

Homeowner Responsibilities When Initiating Changes to their Home

1. Follow the Procedures outlined in Appendix A (chart)
2. Provide a “compelling rationale” – see Appendix G.
3. Contact Dig Safe and exercise appropriate caution when digging near water, gas, and electrical lines.
4. Clerk of the Works (B&G decision March 25, 2014):
 - a. Owner shall pay for a Clerk of the Works (hired by the Buildings and Grounds Circle with Owner input) who will represent the community’s interests during construction of Design Reviewed projects. These interests will focus on exterior flashings, air sealing, ventilation channels, and insulation details, unless specified during the design review approval process.
 - b. Any addition of square footage to a house requires full air barriers and testing per building code requirements, prior to completely enclosing. The results of testing (proving compliance) shall be shared with Buildings & Grounds Circle.
 - c. If the Owner does not initiate the Clerk of the Works process or testing, they risk voiding any responsibility held by the condo association to repair roof and wall assemblies (as well as the interior of the unit) damaged by condensation coming from the interior of the unit or water from the exterior, even if these materials are otherwise “owned” by the condo association.
5. During Constructions
 - a. Homeowner attends weekly construction meetings if Category A.
 - b. Homeowner must wait to close up features that are noted (during DR process) for documentation. If they are closed without approval by Clerk of the Works, homeowner will be required to open and expose work for proper documentation.
6. For Drawing Updates for Changes to houses (Community Decision 5/22/11):
 - a. For the purpose of on-going maintenance, a fee of \$50-\$200 will be charge to update the whole-community drawing set, when exterior changes to a unit occurs. Fee varies relationally to the complexity and if homeowner can provide drawings that can be electronically uploaded.
 - b. Note: Currently Fitch Architecture & Community Design maintains the community drawings (which were updated in 2011 for painting and roofing work (not interior changes). This fee goes to whomever maintains the drawings.
7. Warranties for New Work:
 - a. For a period of 3 years after B & G sign off on the completed work, the homeowner is responsible for any leaks or damages to the exterior shell of the

- their new work/addition and all previously existing areas tied into, disturbed, and or affected through the creation of the new work/addition..
- b. The condominium association will begin charging additional condo fees (as determined) upon occupancy of the new work. This money will be applied as per other condo fees to replacement reserves budget for eventual re-painting, re-siding, re-roofing new and existing work. This money cannot be drawn upon for this purpose until after the 3-year warranty period has expired.

Community Responsibilities during Design Review Process

Community members are responsible for:

1. Reading and reviewing sketches
2. Responding with personal and community concerns in a timely manner to the Homeowner, Design Review Committee, and/or appropriate circle representative (Care and Counsel, Buildings and Grounds, PALs)
3. Seeking help and/or mediation when needed to express concerns – through the Design Review Committee or Care and Counsel Circle – if s/he is uncomfortable talking directly with homeowner.

DESIGN CATEGORIES

Specific procedures are described in Appendix A for each design category below. Items that are difficult to categorize will be discussed by DR to determine what category to follow. At least two (2) design review members will concur on the category.

A – Additions To Houses (Changes to house footprint)

- Living Space Additions
- Decks & porches
- Sheds (attached to home or with a foundation)

B – Major Changes To Houses & Landscape (Doesn't change footprint)

- Dormers and other major changes to the exterior
- Addition of an exterior door
- Addition of one or more exterior windows, skylights, and other roof and wall penetrations.
- Major changes in landscape features such as, roads, walkways and paths (serving more than a single house or extending significantly into new areas), permanent play structures, retaining walls, fences, etc.

C – Additions & Major Changes to Community Buildings

- Common House
- Office Building

- Annex
- Carports
- Sheds
- Agricultural buildings such as chicken houses, green houses, garden sheds, etc.
- Other

D - Minor Changes to Existing Houses, Landscapes, Community Buildings, and Exterior Lighting

- New exterior mechanical systems (such as condensers)
- Exterior Lighting
- Paint Color Changes
- Walkways & terraces serving a single house (that do not impact drainage)
- Signs
- Modifications to existing decks & porches (such as new railings)
- Trellises
- Addition or Removal of tall and/or extensive plantings, such as new trees that affect views and/or solar gain
- Temporary/moveable play structures

APPEAL/GRIEVANCE PROCESS

1. The homeowner (asking for the initial review) can appeal conclusions/decisions of the design review process to the Design Review Committee or a specially arranged meeting at any point in this process.
2. Other community homeowners can appeal conclusions/decisions of a design review process to the Design Review Committee or a specially arranged meeting within the two week posting period.
3. Other community homeowners can bring a grievance to the Design Review Committee, Buildings and Grounds, Care and Counsel and/ or Full Circle Meeting for the following situations and others as such become necessary:
 - a. Construction started without following procedures
 - b. Change during construction without following procedures
4. The community can put construction on hold if necessary to complete a design review process (even if this causes a delay in completion and financial cost to the homeowner).

APPENDIX A - DESIGN REVIEW PROCEDURES CHART

See attached chart for sequence of required procedural tasks, for each category of design change.

APPENDIX B – Standard Specifications

To ensure that changes are built to adequate standards, we suggest the following specifications:

1. Windows and Doors
 - a. Metal or vinyl clad exterior material (interior of windows can still be wood)
 - b. Rough opening wrapped in Vycor or similar. Utilize Vycorners or other corner treatment to avoid tears and wrinkles. Doors should have full “pan flashing” at sill.
 - c. Fully air sealed and insulated at rough opening / window
 - d. Fully caulked between window and trim and trim and siding
 - e. Include window and door trim to match community standard
 - f. Head trim capped with flashing
2. Exterior trim:
 - a. Composite trim preferred (synthetic)
 - b. Painted wood allowed but must be back primed and all end cuts primed. Exterior face to receive min. one coat prime and 2 coats exterior finish coats.
3. Patching / Infill of Existing Walls.
 - a. Frame in wall to match existing construction
 - b. Insulate wall to meet code (minimum); Recommend dense pack cellulose
 - c. Air seal connection to existing wall: foam against rough openings (per window specifications above), tape sheetrock, tape joints at exterior siding, etc.
 - d. Install rain screen over exterior sheathing
 - e. Install new siding to match existing (back primed, caulked at all butt joints, etc.
 - f. Paint siding to match existing
4. New Deck / Building attachment
 - a. Extend flashing up under siding min. 8”
5. New Roof Sections (for additions and porches)
 - a. Ice and Water shield at all eaves, valleys and changes in roof pitch
 - b. Continuous eave / ridge vent connections above insulation and at eaves and ridge, unless “hot roof design”
 - c. All penetrations fully air sealed
 - d. All penetrations fully flashed and caulked
 - e. Any intersection between roof and wall to be properly flashed with continuous or stepped flashing
 - f. End of flashing to have “kick out” to push water away from siding

APPENDIX C – Possible Roles within Design Review Process

AIM: to facilitate ease of process for community and homeowner, for supportive, inclusive and long-term peace of our community. At the beginning of the process, and as needed, review & utilize the roles below:

1. Design Review Representative to/for the Community (formerly called “shepherd”)
 - supports homeowner in following and completing Design Review Process and Design Review Procedures Chart
 - facilitates community meetings during design phase and as needed throughout project (or delegates facilitation). Facilitation includes responsibilities defined below.
 - attend 8:00 AM Monday (weekly) construction meeting as needed
 - keep Design Review and appropriate committees in the loop, sharing info and gathering support in a timely manner
2. Facilitator
 - with input from community, homeowner & design review committee, develops agendas for design meetings
 - insures agenda transparency
 - facilitates meetings throughout design process, assigning minute taker at each meeting
 - insures minutes get published to DR committee and to pertinent parties (possibly including connect)
 - maintains impartiality throughout process
3. Design Review Advisors: (group of Design Review members)
 - commitment to reference Design Review manual and/or procedures chart as needed
 - generally understand technical and aesthetic aspects of design ideas and proposals
 - continuity of attendance at design meetings through completion of project, and/or stay abreast of project so as to maintain flow of project proposal
 - vets ideas during exploration phase of design process & as they arise
 - hones project design to ensure community buy-in for maintenance, durability & aesthetics

4. Buildings & Ground and PALS:
 - Ensures protection and stewardship of PVCA assets; includes specifications in Appendices E & F such as materials, flashing & other technical aspects
 - signs off at project completion (to establish warranty dates)
 - attends 8:00am Monday weekly construction meetings with COTW, builder, homeowner, inspectors (as needed) and Design Review committee member as needed
5. Clerk of the Works (COTW)
 - reads, verifies and photo-documents adherence to architectural drawings, agreements & blueprints, flashing technologies and requirements/codes; completes, documents and uploads Appendix D Clerk of the Works Site Report to appropriate unit on google drive.
 - assumes responsibility to community for project following specific technologies & building details.
 - attends 8:00am Monday weekly construction meetings with B&G, PALS, builder, homeowner, & town inspectors, and design review committee member (as needed)
 - communicates weekly and as needed to DR representative, committee and/or chair.
 - responds to project, committee & community needs in a timely manner
6. Care and Counsel Representative:
 - serves as vibeskeeper at meetings; follows up with issues & engaged parties
 - supports conversations & resolutions amongst aggrieved parties.
 - maintains impartiality throughout design process.

Date of Site Visit:

Project Name:

Unit Number:

Name of Recorder (Clerk of the Works):

Description of project progress and specific / relevant items observed:

Note: The main objective of the reports is to confirm that exterior sealants and flashings (at all intersections and penetrations of the exterior envelope), siding, roofing trim materials, etc. meet the objectives for low on-going maintenance for the condominium association. Also, the homeowner warranty period, after which the condominium association accepts responsibility for maintaining the exterior, does not start until final report by clerk and sign off by Buildings and Grounds Circle.

Description of remaining relevant items to be installed:

Submit report to

1. Current chair of Design Review Circle and /or Design Review project representative
2. Current chair of Buildings and Ground circle
3. On line archive (file under Buildings and Grounds / Design Review/ Unit Project Documentation / Unit Number

APPENDIX E – ADDITIONAL HOME OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

Excerpts from Buildings & Grounds' policies

For more information regarding responsibilities for building repairs (for general upkeep of buildings not otherwise requiring design review), homeowners should refer to the “Responsibility For Building Repair at Cherry Hill Condo Association”, approved by B&G, 4/22/2014.

1. Wall and Roof Penetrations: 5/22/11, 4/22/14 – *revision expected in late 2015*
 - a. Homeowner is responsible for holes in exterior walls for air conditioners, stoves, etc. including any damage caused by improper installation. Owner will return abandoned holes to pre-hole conditions if/when unit is removed.
 - b. New wall penetrations should go through standard DR process for Minor Changes.
 - c. Owners need permission from the community to penetrate the sheathing of the building (skylights, bathroom exhaust fans, etc.).
 - d. Any damage to the sheathing or interior of the unit caused by items that are the responsibility of the unit owner will be paid for by the unit owner.
2. Solar Panels: 4/22/2014
 - a. Owners need permission to install solar arrays or other items on the walls or roof of the building and are responsible for costs to remove and reinstall when the community needs to perform repairs behind the array.
3. Roof Leaks: 5/22/11
 - a. Upon detection, roof leaks should be immediately reported to B and G. If Buildings and Grounds does not respond within 12 hours, homeowner is responsible to begin making inquiries to roofers to have roof fixed in very timely manner.
 - b. Homeowner should take immediate precautions to protect interior of home.
 - c. Community will pay for roof repairs, assuming community policies have been followed and warranty periods applied.
4. Porch Painting: 5/22/11
 - a. Front Porches: The community shall take responsibility to paint small and medium *front* porch posts and rafter tails along the same schedule as other exterior painting work on the 32 housing units.
 - b. Back Porches and Decks: All painting on *back* porches and decks remains the responsibility of the individual homeowners.

Accepted Interpretations:

- Larger front porches (greater than 8' x 8') fall into “back porch” category and are homeowner responsibility for painting.

- Front porches that are integrated with back porches: B&G will determine which areas are to be painted by the community and which by the homeowner.
 - Bee damage (on front porches) is homeowner's responsibility. Note: some damage has been noticed, particularly in unpainted hemlock structures. It is recommended that these surfaces be painted.
 - Unpainted cedar and hemlock posts shall remain unpainted at time of any scheduled painting by the community. If homeowner paints these posts in the future, then the community will repaint according to a future schedule of painting work.
 - Individuals may work directly with community-hired painters to have other areas painted at the same time as long as it does not add significantly to the complexity of the bidding and painting process and does not ultimately delay the completion of community-contracted work.
5. Porch and Deck Repairs: 5/22/11
- a. Homeowners are responsible for all aspects of repair and maintenance of porches and decks (except roofs and their supporting posts), and should keep them in a safe and sufficiently maintained condition. Maintenance of railings, decking, stairs, ceilings and lattice on front porches remain the responsibility of the homeowners as stipulated in the Community Deed.
 - b. Community has assumed ownership of all porch roofing (after 3-year warranty period for new roofs) including asphalt shingles, flat roof membranes and translucent plastic.
 - c. If B&G, acting on the behalf of the community, is not satisfied with the maintenance of an item:
 - 1) B&G will notify homeowner, and ask them if they are aware of the condition and if they intend to take care of it in a reasonably specified time (not to exceed 6 months). B&G may offer advice, but are not obligated to do so.
 - 2) If timeline is not met by homeowner, B&G will discuss in an open meeting, with homeowner invited.
 - 3) If needed, B&G will proceed to repair. Prior to repairs, homeowner will be informed in writing that the community will be taking on the repair and that homeowner will be charged. B&G will not be obligated to get competitive bids for the work.
 - 4) Finance committee shall be responsible for figuring out how to charge the homeowner for these repairs.

Recommendations for Window Care

Windows are owned by the homeowner, not the community. The community recommends the following actions and maintenance to help them last for many years:

1. Close your windows when it is raining (particularly casement windows).
2. Annual maintenance of windows:
 - a. Casements: Refinish top edge of sash so that any rain falling on open window does not penetrate the wood and cause problems:
 - Open window to access top of sash
 - Clean top edge of sash
 - Re-poly top edge of sash with oil-based polyurethane
 - b. All Windows: Lubricate weatherstripping so that it remains flexible so that it continues to seal well
 - a. Open sash
 - b. Clean weatherstripping (four sides of sash
 - c. Spray weatherstripping with silicone spray
3. Periodic maintenance of interior surfaces: maintain painted or poly-urethaned interior surfaces by sanding and refinishing as needed. Keep an eye on south and west facing window sills and sashes that get the most UV attack of surfaces.
4. Reduce condensation on windows. Condensation will cause black mold to grow on the window sashes. If you maintain a relative humidity in the winter below 50% you should be able to avoid regular condensation on windows. High condensation can also lead to other building problems. Condensation can be controlled by always running fans when cooking and showering, and running your “Aldez” whole house fan either continuously or on a timer. Experiment with the timer to balance energy conservation with moisture reduction.

Color schedule - Updated 7/12

Siding Paint Colors:

Red: Hardie: Country Lane Red. (Benjamin Moore Country Redwood 23 PE-45 may have been used at changes but it is not an exact match - 4/E 1258 may be better?)

Blue: Georgetown Blue Kyanize Exterior colors

Cream: Benjamin Moore 1/A 176

Green: Lynchburg Green Benjamin Moore

Taupe: Benjamin Moore 4/E 1539

Yellow: Benjamin Moore PE-9 297 T100 except Amy and Mary's which is the same as the Amherst college round house but I don't have the number here

Brown: Benjamin Moore Tree Bark

Shingle Siding Stain Colors:

Very dark brown: semi solid mahogany: 32806

Dark brown: semi solid fresh brew

Lighter brown: Hidden Valley semi transparent, 14, 18, 20, 24, 28

Grey: Platnum Grey (I think this might be the grey shingles on #7, not sure)

Greyone: 1472 (where?)

Goldtone: 176 (where?)

Trim Paint:

White: 9601 (I think this was a trim, not a base color)

Green: pinelands 446 (I think this was a trim, not a base color)

Blue: van deusen blue HC-156 (I think this was a trim, not a base color)

Cream trim: Benjamin Moore 1/A 176

Rafter Tails at units 24 and 25: Cream - Benjamin Moore 1/A 176? Or Benjamin Moore PE-9 297 T100?

Roofing:

2010: CertainTeed LandMark Woodscape Cobblestone Gray

“architectural type”, fiberglass mat, asphalt and ceramic-coated rock granules, square butt, self-sealing type, 36 inches long by 12 inches wide 30 year warranty, U.L. Type Class "A", and U.L. wind resistance.

2011 – Iko Dual Grey: Unit # 29

2013 – Common House

Iko Cambridge Architectural

Compelling Rationale

Date of Adoption: 10/9/2018

Preamble:

In the spirit of fostering good communication, satisfaction in outcomes and positive relationships, Design Review Circle (DR) adopts the following process that utilizes “Compelling Rationale” in the application for changes to our homes and landscape.

Definition of Compelling Rationale

It is a sufficiently compelling reason for the individual to ask for a change. It considers many levels: the community scale, the building scale, and the detail scale (see examples at end of this document).

Use of Compelling Rationale:

In Design Review **Project Proposal Review Meetings**, we change the dynamic governance norms to:

1. Utilize the concept of **Compelling Rationale** in each aspect of a proposal coming from a homeowner for review.
2. Eliminate the use of **Paramount Objections** in early exploratory meetings, as the goal of early meetings is to get feedback and brainstorm solutions.
3. Hold off on the use of “Paramount Objections” in subsequent Design Review project proposal review meetings, until
 - a. rationale for project (and details) is presented,
 - b. feedback is accepted and discussed, and
 - c. those present are ready and okay with asking “are there any Paramount Objections?”. While we strive to balance personal and community needs, If the overall project is found to be outside of the community's interests, or an individual is unwilling to compromise to meet feedback, Paramount Objections might be the best way to object to a project.

Note: Regular Dynamic Governance (DG) process (including Paramount Objections) will be followed in regular DR circle meetings when projects are not under review.

Reason for adopting Compelling Rationale?

1. Design Review proposals typically come from an individual specifically to benefit this individual, as opposed to the typical cohousing proposals that come from a circle, presumably to benefit the entire community.
2. Asking for “Compelling Rationale” places suitable responsibility on the homeowner and increases understanding.
3. Neighbors should feel free to share their concerns and feel that their needs are balanced with those of the proposal. Asking neighbors if they have “Paramount Objections” can set us up for conflict.
4. **Neighbors should have a reason to say “yes” rather than the burden of saying “no”.**

Examples of "Compelling Rationale"

An individual or household wants to put on an addition to their house. Their presentations at different design review project proposal meetings (and responses to neighbors' concerns) should touch on the three scales.

1. **Community Scale:** Why does the homeowner feel this proposal is important enough for the community to accept it? Are there other options or proposals that would be better for the community? *Examples: it enables large or growing family to fit; or it enables downsizing adult to stay in the community by sharing a household.*
2. **Building Scale:** What are the reasons behind the building dimensions and overall design? Are the proportions and details (that are seen from close and afar) attractive to neighbors? *Examples: the footprint does not negatively impinge on sub-neighborhood paths, spaces and/or massing; the roof line looks "right" (follows community norms).*
3. **Detail Scale:** If details, such as roof overhangs and pitches, window proportions, door styles, and trim, are not similar to community details, provide a compelling reason for deviation. *Examples: a dis-proportionally large window in this location is important as it is the only view to the distant hill or it is the only chance for accessing limited sunshine.*