

# McLean Hamlet Community Association Architectural Control Committee

## Guidelines for Review of Applications for Modifications to the Exterior of Existing Homes or Construction of New Homes

### Background

In the Fairfax County land records, McLean Hamlet is divided into five sections with separate Covenants for each. Covenants can be found at the McLean Hamlet website, [www.mcleanhamlet.org/covenants](http://www.mcleanhamlet.org/covenants). All homeowners should review the Covenants that apply to their lots.

The most common of the covenants states that *"no building shall be erected ... or altered on any lot until the construction plans and specifications have been approved by the Architectural Control Committee as to quality of workmanship and materials, harmony of external design with existing structures and as to location with respect to topography and finish grade elevation."*

If you are contemplating a change to the exterior of your home, please make sure to obtain the approval in advance from the McLean Hamlet Community Association Architectural Control Committee (ACC). It would be most unfortunate if your planned change had to be interrupted or stopped because of your failure to obtain approval.

While your ACC is a reasonable group, we take the enforcement of the Covenants seriously, including taking legal action if necessary and appropriate to enforce the covenants. In general, the ACC requires stricter requirements than those permitted by Fairfax County.

The desirability and continued strength of our Hamlet neighborhood depends greatly on the cohesiveness of the community, which is reflected, in large part, by the harmonious look and feel of the homes in the neighborhood. While the covenants are certainly not intended to inhibit improvements, upgrades, and expansions (even tear-downs), they are unambiguously directed to the preservation of a sense of communal identity.

**We encourage owners to submit preliminary designs and sketches early in the process to receive preliminary guidance from the ACC and avoid unnecessary expense. Meeting with an ACC representative for guidance is also welcome.**

### Guidelines

This document provides a sample of the most common issues addressed by the ACC. This is not an exhaustive list and may be subject to change, as the ACC considers applications on a case-by-case basis in conformity with the covenants and restrictions.

#### Height, Size, and Architectural Design

The ACC is concerned about the overall height, size, and mass of new homes that may not be in harmony with existing homes.

The ACC considers whether the home is substantially taller than neighboring homes, and whether the home appears to occupy a larger percentage of the lot than other homes in the neighborhood. We evaluate the square footage of the footprint of the home compared to the square footage of the overall lot.

The ACC may require lower heights and smaller square footage depending on the size and topography of an individual lot and the relationship of the home to adjacent and nearby homes.

The ACC is unlikely to approve imposing rooflines, rooflines with slopes greater than 45 degrees, swoop roofs, or soffits that are too large.

On sloping lots, the ACC will carefully review how much of the exterior is exposed on the down-sloping side.

For corner lots, the architectural design on both sides facing the street must be architecturally distinctive. We seek to avoid large, flat walls on sides facing the street.

Contemporary-style homes will only be considered on a case-by-case basis in areas where they are in harmony with nearby contemporary-style homes.

### **Exterior Walls and Materials**

To maintain the values of our neighborhood and in the keeping of an upscale community, materials used on the exterior of the home shall be of high quality (better than builder's standard). This includes exterior doors, windows, exterior walls, roofing material, soffits, and trim.

### **Water table**

The home's water table shall be brick or stone (the water table is defined by the exterior ground floor walls on all sides of the house from the ground to the elevation of the bottom of the first floor). Exposed cement block or cast-in-place cement basement walls are not acceptable.

### **Siding materials**

The following siding materials may be used above the home's water table: wood; simulated wood products such as beveled siding or hardie board; brick and brick veneer. Material such as vinyl, aluminum siding, synthetic stucco, or synthetic stone will not be approved. The ACC is unlikely to approve materials that are not already in McLean Hamlet. Stucco will be considered on a case-by-case basis only for contemporary-style homes.

A new home must have the same siding selection on all four sides of each floor.

We will consider stone accents on the front (on a case-by-case basis), but not above the first floor.

### **Garage**

The Covenants prohibit garages larger than for two cars.

### **Landscaping**

If trees are taken down during construction, intentionally or otherwise, they need to be replaced. A proposed landscaping plan must be included with every application to construct a new home, which the ACC will review with care.

### **Site Alignment**

The ACC will not approve any application to construct a new home if the setback from the street of the new home is substantially different than the neighboring homes on the street. The front of homes along the street should be roughly in line with each other.

### **Drainage**

A proposed grading plan must be included with every application to construct a new home, which the ACC will review to assess and adjust, if necessary, to avoid drainage onto other properties. The application form requires topography at 1-foot contour intervals.

### **Setbacks from any Property Line**

The ACC will not approve any application to construct a new home or renovate an existing home if any of the new structure is less than 10 feet from any property line.

### **Fencing**

The Covenants require that *“no fence ... shall be erected ... nearer to the street than the minimum building set back lines ...”*

### **Neighbors**

The ACC will consult the neighbors prior to approving any application to construct a new home or substantially renovate an existing home.