

BLACKWATER VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE GUIDELINES



Whether you're a property owner in Blackwater Village or a contractor planning to build or make property improvements, your Association's Covenants require pre-construction approval from BVA's Architectural Committee.

The Committee fills an important role in maintaining community standards. It's also an important resource when it comes to interpreting issues related to easements, setbacks, potential code violations and avoiding costly mistakes.

Starting the Process

The following information is by no means inclusive. So long before you pound a nail or even apply for a permit, your first action should be to review your BVA Covenants, Restrictions and Conditions. If you do not have a current copy, please contact the BVA Secretary and we'll send you one. You will also be advised on how to proceed

Much, of course, will depend upon the scope of your project. In the case of a new home or addition, you may be asked to provide (1) construction plans and specifications; (2) architectural renderings; (3) site plan/s showing the proposed location of the structure, well and septic field; and such detail as may be requested relative to grading and tree removal.

If you are adding a shed, a fence or making some other improvement, less detail will likely suffice. The Committee does not routinely review permit applications but it is incumbent upon the owner/builder to secure them since BVA approvals are 'conditionally' approved, i.e., subject to all necessary permits and/or approvals having been reviewed and approved by the County, DelDot (driveways) and DenRec (well and septic issues).

For understandable reasons, formal requests for review and approval must be made in writing. Changes made following approval must be re-submitted for Committee review.

If a property owner disagrees with a Committee decision, it can be appealed directly to the BVA Board.

KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

BVA Architectural Committee	
Adolph Perticari, <i>Chrm.</i>	(302) 541-4452
Dale Emge	(410) 688-2749
Frank DiNenna	(302) 604-7126
John Schaefer	(302) 537-6072
Dave Suders	(302) 245-5626
BVA Liens, Dues, Title Transfers	
Bettie Dunkin, Treasurer	(302) 364-2060
Dale Emge, <i>Acting Board Pres.</i>	(410) 688-2749
Sussex Co. Planning & Zoning	(302) 855-7878
Sussex Co. Permits	(302) 855-7720
DENREC (Well & septic)	(302) 856-4561
DelDot (Area 5)	(302) 732-5489

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If You Are Building

Building type & use: All lots must be used exclusively for residential purposes. Homes must be single-family, detached dwellings. Modular homes are permitted; mobile homes are not. No home over one year old can be moved into Blackwater Village. Open pylons or stilts are prohibited.

Dwelling Size: Single-story dwellings -- minimum 1200 sq. ft. for exclusive of open porches, garages and basements. Two-story dwellings -- minimum 1000 sq. ft. on first floor and 500 sq. ft. on second floor.

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Building Setbacks & Easements: Setbacks conform to those in effect for Sussex County but it should be noted that all BVA lots also have a 5 ft. centerline easement. In the case of single ownership of contiguous lots occupied by the owner as a whole, the foregoing setback lines apply to the parcel as a whole.

Generally, homes or any ancillary structure larger than 600 sq. ft. must be set back 30 ft. from a front road, 15 ft. from a side road and 10 ft. from inside and back property lines. An open, unroofed front deck or porch or unattached structures like a shed or carport (less than 600 sq ft) can set 5 ft. into the setback.

Variances & Non-conforming Use: Any variance approved by Sussex County must also be submitted for Architectural Committee review and approval.

More Guidelines for Builders

Time of construction: One year from the time construction commences.

Length of workday: Construction is limited to between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Mon-Sat. No construction is permitted on Sundays and holidays. Property owners are cautioned that BVA covenants hold the property owner responsible for actions of guests as well as contractors and subs. That means any enforcement of covenants, including fines, will be levied on the owner and not the contractor.

Signs: Builder, contractor or realtor signs must not exceed 216 sq. in.

Parging: All foundations of new construction must be parged (parged) upon completion of the structure.

Tents, trailers and other temporary structures: Not to be used on any lot for temporary living purposes unless such use and location during construction are approved by the Committee. Camping is expressly prohibited at any time.

Solid Waste: Haul-a-way containers are permitted, even encouraged. All waste, construction debris, etc., must be placed in containers or otherwise hidden from view.

Port-a-pots: Permitted during construction.

Driveways: DelDot review is required; if necessary, the State will install at no charge pipe of a specified size purchased by the homeowner.

Tree removal: Prior to lot clearing and/or construction, all trees to be removed must be clearly marked for review. If removed, stumps must be ground or cut flush with the ground. Generally, on improved lots, no trees measuring 6" or more in diameter may be removed without Arch. Co. review and approval.

Landscaping: Grass is not required; the use of wood chips, suitable ground cover or other natural treatment is acceptable; unsightly weeds are not. In the case of new homes or additions, all cleared areas should be either seeded, sodded or planted with appropriate ground cover no later than the first fall or spring period following completion of construction. The Committee also may require a landscaping plan for the front of a proposed dwelling be submitted at the time of review.

Grasscutting: Owners who make infrequent or seasonal use of dwellings--or maintain cleared lots in anticipation of building--must keep grass cut to an acceptable height. If not, it will be cut by the Association and the expense charged back to the property owner..

In-ground and above-ground pools and outside hot tubs must be appropriately fenced or otherwise screened (per Architectural Co. review and approval).

Fences and Sheds: Two of the biggest problems the Committee deals with are fences and sheds. The reasons are simple – property owners too often bypass BVA and county approval processes and eventually find themselves in conflict with setback and easement-related restrictions. There are specific guidelines which vary by size, height and location so approval is incumbent. Moreover, recent DenRec changes expand the permeable area required for a septic field. If you don't obtain such approvals, a subsequent property transfer or resale may be held up.