

HILLS HIGHLANDS MASTER ASSOCIATION

INDEPENDENCE HILL

ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

I. INTRODUCTION

Independence Hill is one of 23 communities in the Hills Highlands, which is managed by an elected Board of Trustees of the Hills Highlands Master Association (HHMA) who represent each of the communities. Each single-family community - including your community - has a volunteer Architectural Committee, the Independence Hill Architectural Committee (IHAC).

The role of the IHAC is to provide and oversee adherence to guidelines for homeowners with respect to any modifications, improvements, and general maintenance of the exterior of Independence Hill homes and properties. Ultimately, trying to ensure that homeowner improvements are aesthetically consistent and appealing to help protect property values of the community.

The responsibility of the IHAC is to review and approve all architectural variance requests for any modifications or improvements to the exterior of any home and/or property within the Independence Hill community.

No owner may make or contract to have made any alteration, change or modification to the exterior of any homes or properties within the Independence Hill community without prior approval from the Independence Hill Architectural Committee.

The purpose of the Architectural Guidelines is to advise homeowners about:

- Permissible modifications and improvements
- Processes and requirements for approval from Independence Hill, HHMA, as well as from Bernards Township, if necessary
- General property care and maintenance

These guidelines are made in consideration of, and to be consistent with the **HHMA Master Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions to which all HHMA homeowners must comply**. Please acquaint yourself with this document, which is available at www.hillshighlands.com. Violations to the Master Declaration with respect to homeowner property improvements and maintenance could result in costs to mitigate work not approved or result in fines or property liens.

IHAC Members, as of this writing, are:

Angie Kottkamp
Stan Oakes
Bill Sellitti
Kootala Venugopal

Anyone interested in serving as an architectural committee member should contact the HHMA Management office. Your participation will gladly be considered.

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II. TOWNSHIP PERMITS & HHMA ARCHITECTURAL VARIANCE REQUEST FORM

Prior to contracting or beginning any exterior home or property modifications or improvements, homeowners are required to:

Confirm if Bernards Township requires a permit for the proposed work to be done. Visit www.bernards.org, contact the Zoning office at 908-204-2507, or go to the Engineering Services Building at 277 South Maple Ave, Basking Ridge.

Obtain the Architectural Variance Request Form: The form may be obtained online at www.hillshighlands.com. On the left side navigation menu, click on “Forms”, then “Frequently Used Forms.” On the next screen, click on “Architectural Variance Request Form.”

Complete the Architectural Variance Request Form: The form can be completed online and then printed out. Instructions are on the form.

Submit the Architectural Variance Request Form: Variance Requests should be submitted to the Management office **via hand delivery to ensure completeness**. Any applicable township permit **applications** must be submitted, as well. If applicable, include a copy of your survey to illustrate location of proposed work to facilitate a more expedient review of your request. Some modifications will also require architectural drawings and specifications be provided. The name of the licensed contractor that will be doing the work should also be provided.

The completed Architectural Variance Request can also be mailed or emailed to:

Hills Highlands Master Association
75 Hansom Road
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
arch_hhma@hillshighlands.com

III. MODIFICATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

A. HOUSE EXTERIOR

Siding

Homeowners may consider using brick, wood, vinyl or synthetic material. Synthetic material should have a wood-grain appearance. Board width and texture should match that of the existing siding. No patching permitted. The entire house, or, an entire side should be replaced, and must match the rest of the siding. Color should be consistent with others in the community.

Roofing

Roof shingles must be multi-dimensional asphalt shingles and should match the existing color, or, be as close a match as possible. Other **similar** colors will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A sample must be provided with the Architectural Variance Request.

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Windows

Replacement windows must match the existing style of other windows for the home. If all windows are to be replaced, the style must be consistent with the original windows. A picture of the proposed windows, along with make and model, must be provided with the Architectural Variance Request.

House Trim

House trim must be wood; however, a synthetic material, such as AZEK, may be permissible. All house trim must be white in color. Vinyl or aluminum trim are not permitted. No gingerbread or filigree trim will be permitted.

Doors and Shutters

Door color should be an original color or a complementary color to the home. Other colors may be considered on case-by-case basis. A picture of the door, and a description of the manufacturer, the door material and the door color must be provided with the Architectural Variance Request. Storm doors should be solid glass. Installation of storm doors in the back of the home does not require architectural committee approval. Shutters will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Garage Doors

An Architectural Variance Request must include a picture of the garage door, along with the manufacturer, model and material. The standard color is white; however, other colors may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Garage doors may be solid or have windows in the top row only. Material may be wood, steel or vinyl.

Walkways, Driveways, Curbing and Sidewalks

Original front walkways are concrete. Original driveways are asphalt. Paving stone or natural stone driveways will be considered on a case-by-case basis. No pebbles, stones or concrete for driveways will be permitted. Seal-coating driveways does not require approval; however, driveway replacement or the addition of Belgium block curbing does require submitting an Architectural Variance Request. Sidewalks are concrete and if they require replacing, it is the township's responsibility; however, **it is the responsibility of the owner (or tenant) to clear snow or ice from sidewalks around your home.**

Structural Additions

Additions such as screened porches and sunrooms will be considered on case-by-case basis. Appearance and materials must be consistent with the house structure. A full set of architectural drawings should be submitted, along with a copy of your survey reflecting the location of the new addition. No portion of the addition can extend beyond the original side lines of the house. No metal, glass or prefabricated units of any kind will be permitted.

Decks, Stairs, Railings

New or replacement rear decks/stairs cannot extend beyond the original side lines of the house. The deck should be constructed using pressure-treated wood or synthetic wood

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(such as Trek) in an appropriate earth tone. Deck railings can be constructed of either natural wood or synthetic material.

B. LANDSCAPING

Owners are responsible to maintain their lawns, planting beds, trees, and areas bordering on walkways, driveways, sidewalks and curbing weed-free. Any shrubbery or tree branches near sidewalks must always be maintained and trimmed back. If you have a tree that requires removal, you should hire a tree removal company that is licensed by the State of NJ, and insured. Utility mark-outs should be done before doing any digging.

Shrub/Planting Beds

Changes to planting beds such as adding and/or deleting plantings, flowers, ground cover, or shrubs, do not require approval. Lawn ornaments and garden statues are permitted in the rear yard, but are prohibited in the front yard.

Fencing Restrictions

All fencing requires an Architectural Variance Request be submitted. Permanent fencing is permitted for the rear yard only. The following types of fencing are permitted: Aluminum/wrought iron, PVC – picket or split rail, or cedar picket. No chain link or stockade (or any other solid fencing) permitted. Fencing requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. **Additional restrictions apply** to lots backing up to Allen Road. This fencing must be black aluminum and must be no taller than four (4) feet tall.

Retaining Walls

Maintenance and/or replacement are the homeowner's responsibility. The IHAC has approved replacing retaining walls in the past when the building material is aesthetically consistent and correctly installed by professionals. Replacement of existing retaining walls requires an Architectural Variance Request Form be submitted, which must include a copy of the property survey reflecting the location of the wall, a copy of scaled drawings, and samples of the material to be used. A township permit may also be required.

Drainage/Grading Changes/Land Disturbance

Pursuant to the HHMA Master Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions, Section 3.07, "There shall be no interference with the established drainage patterns over any property within the Hills Highlands."

C. OTHER MODIFICATIONS

Backyard Swing Sets/Playgrounds/Temporary Structures

Installation of backyard swing sets/playgrounds are permitted without architectural committee approval. Swing sets/playgrounds must be constructed of weather resistant wood and installed in the backyard. Play apparatus should not be visible from the street. Natural plantings (e.g., tall shrubs) are acceptable concealment.

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Trampolines and other temporary structures such as basketball stanchions will be taken into consideration on a case by case basis. The approval of the IHAC is required prior to installation.

Mailboxes

All mailboxes and posts should meet U.S. Postal requirements (e.g., correct height, size, etc.). Regulations can be found on the website, www.hillshighlands.com under Architectural Guidelines. Next, click on "USPS Approved Mailbox Guidelines".

Natural Gas Generators

Bernard's Township has guidelines and permit requirements for homeowners interested in installing an exterior natural gas generator. A copy of a permit **application** should be included with the Architectural Variance Request, along with a copy of your survey clearly marking the location of the proposed gas generator. Once your Architectural Variance Request has been approved, you can then take the approval letter back to the township. The generator should be operated in such a manner as to minimize disturbance to your neighbors.

Satellite Dishes

Please refer to the Hills Highlands Master Association Resolution regarding Satellite Dish/Antenna Installation which can be found on the Association website www.hillshighlands.com under Architectural Guidelines, then "Satellite/Antenna Installation. If you are considering installation, please include all specifications along with your Architectural Variance Request.

Retractable Awnings in the rear of the home

Permitted without submitting an Architectural Variance Request.

Weathervanes and Permanent Flagpoles

Installation is permitted and requires an Architectural Variance Request be submitted along with a description of where they will be installed.

Solar Panels

Many homes are not appropriately situated to take advantage of solar panels. Preferred solar array location is the rear roof of the home. The Hills Highlands Master Association has Small Solar Energy System Standards in place for installation requirements which are posted on the website, www.hillshighlands.com under Architectural Guidelines. If you are considering installation, please include all system specifications along with your Architectural Variance Request. A township permit may also be required.

Tool Sheds/Dog Houses

Free-standing sheds and dog houses are not permitted.

Firepits/Outdoor Fireplaces

Installation of permanent firepits is permitted in the backyard and requires an Architectural Variance Request be submitted along with a copy of the property survey

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depicting the location it will be installed. Temporary free-standing firepits are also permitted but do not require architectural committee approval. Owners should be cognizant of the location firepits are installed to ensure fire safety.

Hot Tubs

Hot tubs will be considered on case-by-case basis. They should not be visible from the curbside or neighboring properties. If visible, natural shrubbery (*pine trees, etc.*) must be planted to conceal the hot tub. No in-ground construction will be permitted.

Swimming Pools

Installation of inground swimming pools/lap pools requires an Architectural Variance Request be submitted along with a copy of the property survey depicting the location it will be installed. Pool specifications and pictures will also be requested. There are specific township requirements for pool installation. Owners can contact the township for more information. Above ground pools are not permitted under any circumstances except for small children's inflatable wading pools to be used only in the back yard.