



## DESIGN REVIEW BOARD Frequently Asked Questions

### **What items require review and approval?**

Currently, most exterior alterations or additions, no matter how large or small and including tree removal, require review and approval by either the Design Review Board (DRB) or the Reston Association (RA) Covenants staff prior to implementation.

### **Do all applications have to be reviewed by the DRB?**

Certain types of applications such as swimming pools, screened porches, sunrooms, major additions, applications with affected parties, appeals, and applications from a builder, Condominium, Apartment, Cluster Association, Reston Association and Fairfax County must be reviewed by a DRB Panel or the Full Design Review Board. All other applications (exterior color change, fences, lights, etc.) will be reviewed by the Covenants staff, either independently or in consultation with a member of the DRB.

### **What should be included with my application?**

A complete application includes a detailed written description of the proposed exterior modification or addition and specifications of the materials and colors (i.e. a manufacturer's brochure, catalog cut, or detail sheets) as appropriate. The Design Guidelines for the proposal may also require elevation drawings to scale, a site plan showing its size and location, photographs of the existing condition, and signatures from neighboring property owners (see the next question).

### **Why do I have to notify my neighbors? And, whom do I have to notify?**

Neighboring property owners, including cluster associations and the Reston Association, may be affected by additions or alternations to your property. As a means of communication about your proposal, you are required to notify at least three of those neighbors who will be most affected by your project. For certain types of applications, wider, additional notification may be required. Please show your neighbors all the plans and material that you will be submitting to the DRB for review when you approach them for their signatures. **The signatures are required to attest that your neighbors have been notified of your project, not whether or not they approve of it.**

In town homes and patio home clusters, the applicant is required to notify at least two closest (most affected) neighboring property owners and a member of the Cluster Board. For single-family detached houses, at least the three most affected neighboring property owners must be notified. In certain instances, you may be required to notify additional property owners.

If a neighboring property owner is unavailable or has concerns about signing the application, please contact the RA Covenants staff; an alternate means of notification may be required.

### **Who is an "Affected Party"?**

An Affected Party is a neighboring property owner whose property is materially affected by the application, who has officially registered in writing with the Reston Association as an Affected Party, and whose request has not been denied by the DRB. While an Affected Party cannot prevent the review of your application, the Affected Party has the right to speak at the DRB review, be informed of the DRB's decision(s), and appeal the final decision within seven (7) days of the date the decision is mailed.

**How often does the DRB meet?**

A DRB Panel meets to review applications every Tuesday evening, except for the third Tuesday of the month (that is reserved for Full DRB Board meetings), holidays, and inclement weather. In order for an application to be reviewed at a DRB Panel meeting, the completed application must be scheduled at least one week in advance for one of the 9 available appointment times.

**If I have an application scheduled for the DRB Panel review, should I attend the meeting?**

Yes, you and possibly your contractor should attend and present your application at a DRB Panel meeting. The covenants counselor assigned to your property will schedule the review of your application for a date and time of your convenience.

**Who serves on the DRB?**

Currently, the DRB is comprised of nine volunteer members who all live in Reston. Seven members are architects/design professionals and two are lay members. The Reston Association Board of Directors appoints DRB members for 3-year terms after completing an interview process.

**Can you explain how a DRB meeting is run?**

Each Panel meeting of the DRB begins with allotted time for general member comments regarding the DRB process or other concerns not specifically related to a member's property. From approximately 7:30 p.m. until 10:00 p.m., personal presentations are heard regarding applications scheduled in advance by the applicants. Personal presentations consist of the applicant's explanation of the application and Affected Party comments (if applicable). The DRB members then discuss the information among themselves and come to a decision. Some applications require more than 15 minutes (i.e. initial construction, major additions, or applications with Affected Parties) but the DRB and Covenants staff make a concerted effort to keep on schedule. Following the personal presentations, the DRB reviews any remaining applications that are scheduled.

**How long do I have to wait for the DRB decision?**

Final decision of applications reviewed at the consultation level will be released as soon as possible, usually within three days of the meeting. The final decision of applications reviewed by a DRB Panel or by the DRB Full Board, will be mailed one week after the meeting, this allows the draft minutes to be circulated among all the DRB members for review and comment. Please do not undertake any construction related to your project, including tree removal, until you are in receipt of the final written decision.

**How long is the DRB decision valid?**

A final DRB decision is valid indefinitely. However, the DRB may void any decision after two years from the date of the decision, if work has not commenced on the alternation or addition and the terms of the decision restrict the DRB's review of another application after the two-year period has elapsed.

**Is it possible to have an application re-heard by the DRB if I (or an Affected Party) object to the decision?**

An applicant may request, in writing, that a decision made at the consultation level may be scheduled for review by a Panel of the DRB.

An applicant (or Affected Party) may appeal, in writing, a decision made at the Panel level to another Panel of the DRB. A Panel containing at least two DRB members who did not review the original application will hear the appeal.

**\*\* For any additional questions, contact the Covenants Staff at 703-437-9580 \*\***

**You can find the Design Guidelines on the Internet at [http://www.reston.org/design/d\\_designguidelines.html](http://www.reston.org/design/d_designguidelines.html)**