

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sue Ann Spens, Beaux Arts Clerk-Treasurer
FROM: *Mona Green*, Town Planner
RE: Update on Planning Commission Projects
DATE: September 30, 2016

Planning Commissioners have been working to define the preferred design standards for new home construction in the Village. Commissioners recognize that an early introduction to the Town's preferences through a published statement of design guidelines would be effective. The statement would be available in a prominent location on the Town website, as well as distributed to local realtors and homebuilders.

The attached document is the result of several months of discussion. At this time, Commissioners are interested in any feedback, both to the document itself and the method of distribution.

Upcoming topics to be presented to the Council in the coming months include proposed revisions to the zoning code that clarify and adjust several development restrictions and allowances, including setback intrusions, consideration of residential volume, building plate height, and remodel timelines.

As always, Commissioners and Staff are available to answer any questions.

Home Design Guidelines

Beaux Arts Village

Beaux Arts is unique. It is first and foremost a *community*. Neighbors stop to say hello to one other, children play together and we gather for various community events throughout the year. The Village itself is compact; its lots are of varied size and topography; its lanes are intentionally narrow; bald eagles nest in our old growth trees; our homes embrace a variety of architectural styles. Our 'best' homes are those that show sensitivity to the neighborhood. We wish to encourage homes that are thoughtfully built to complement our natural environment and contribute to the feeling of our community.

While important, zoning codes are primarily limitations and prohibitions. Our hope in this short narrative is to complement those regulations with key design elements we consider desirable. We share these guidelines for new villagers, architects and builders seeking to construct homes within Beaux Arts which sustain our values and contribute to our community aesthetic.

Architectural Design

The smaller homes and cottages that originally sat on our lots are slowly being redeveloped. Though we do not seek to avoid change, when change occurs it should be consistent with the character of our community. We value homes that are thoughtfully built, are of appropriate scale, use quality materials and seem to fit timelessly within their lot.

One feature unique to Beaux Arts homes is their range of vintage and architectural styles. From hundred-year-old wooden cottages to modern glass and steel structures, what our homes share is a thoughtfulness of design. Contrasted with typical faux-quality spec homes common in surrounding communities, the best Beaux Arts homes were consciously designed specifically for their lot. Many of our lots are small and abut adjacent properties, making them visible from all sides. As such, we encourage "four sided" homes (visually pleasing from all sides) that incorporate significant façade modulation. We also encourage the use of high-quality building products, subtle colors and subdued/timeless architecture that is designed to fit seamlessly into our wooded setting.

Site Design and Scale

Good site design transcends architectural style, and houses that follow the topography and natural features of their lot tend to complement, rather than override, its constraints. Preserving mature trees, setting homes back from the street and carefully integrating new landscaping with belts of existing native vegetation are examples of good site design principles valued by our Village. Many surrounding communities have been denuded of mature trees and native vegetation. As a consequence, they have seen a loss of personality and neighborhood definition, a fate we wish to avoid in Beaux Arts.

We value homes that incorporate a respect for scale. It is the smaller homes and cottages of our Village that most contribute to its pedestrian-friendly feel. Smaller homes are naturally more distanced from one another, enhancing the sense of separation between houses and the rural feel one has when passing through the Village. Smaller homes are less imposing and loom less invasively upon adjacent properties. When homes are built to maximize allowable floor area their large footprint often places them up against minimum setback limits and results in the felling of mature trees – this combines to reduce visual separation between neighbors, erode privacy, diminish views and generally take away from our rural feel.

Summary

These guidelines are by no means exhaustive, nor are they mandated regulations. They simply memorialize a few elements of new-home design Beaux Arts strongly wishes to encourage. Our primary goal is to create an awareness of what we value, which we hope will be embraced by those considering joining (or building in) our unique community.

Key Features Encouraged By Beaux Arts in New Home Design

- Constructed to less than maximum allowable size
- Architecturally interesting on all four sides (façade modulation)
- Quality Materials (real stone, wood, etc.)
- Preserving existing mature trees
- Quality landscaping (natural feel, incorporates native vegetation)
- Homes built off of minimum setback limits
- Inviting entries (porches, limited front fencing, garages on side/rear)