

The Otterbein Community Association (OCA) Architectural Review Committee (ARC) committee thought it would be helpful to share some FAQs about the standards for the exterior designs of our homes. We developed these as a way to help you more easily navigate the process when you are contemplating exterior work on your home. These are not comprehensive so we've linked additional resources at the bottom. We are also available to meet for discussion if you have questions.

Thank you,
ARC Committee (Joe Levy and Sarah Cummings)

FAQs

When do I need approval from ARC and Commission for Historical & Architectural Preservation (CHAP)?

If you are planning **ANY** exterior work on your property (front or rear), you must receive approval from ARC and CHAP prior to the beginning of work. This includes work such as repainting doors/trim, repointing of bricks, replacing windows/roofs with the same/similar style/material, and work to restore any part of the exterior to the original. It also includes any changes to the design, material, color or outward appearance. Failure to do so may result in fines or the attachment of a lien on the property by Baltimore City.

Can you outline the process to obtain ARC/CHAP approval?

You must complete an Application for Notice to Proceed form (see Resources). For major projects, you must also submit a Request for Pre-Development Meeting to CHAP. You can learn more about the classification of projects on the CHAP website (see Resources).

Once complete, e-mail your application to the ARC and to CHAP. Contact details can be found on our website (see Resources). ARC will respond to you and copy CHAP. CHAP will then review and notify you via email of its decision.

The average turnaround for the ARC committee is about 7 days, depending on request complexity. Please make sure to factor enough time for both ARC and CHAP to review your request and realize that CHAP reviews ATPs from all over Baltimore City and may have a queue.

Does this process apply to all of Otterbein?

No. The OCA boundaries are the south side of Barre St, west side of Hanover St, north side of Hughes St, east side of Sharp St, and the south side of the 200 block of W. Hill. Other community associations have their own guidelines.

What if I want to paint my front door/trim? How do I know what colors I can use?

Most paint manufacturers have a line of "historic" colors, which include a wide range of muted colors. Benjamin Moore and Sherwin Williams are two readily available manufacturers that homeowners have successfully used.

What do I need to know about window replacement?

Windows must visually match the historic windows in size, type, configuration, detail and overall appearance. Standards are higher for windows in front and on the sides, visible from the street

or public walkways. Key details for windows can be found both in Item E of the Exterior Design Standards in our Covenants and pages 36-38 of the Guidelines for Exterior Restoration.

What about roofs?

As with everything else, the bottom line is that roofs have to retain the look and character of the original. We recognize that there have been advances in roofing materials and take that into consideration in our review. Roofs must preserve the original skyline and design characteristics. Existing roof pitches, dormers, eaves, fascias, cornices and chimneys must be retained/restored. Front facades of adjoining buildings of similar architectural style need to have uniform roof materials in complementary colors. Key details can be found both in Item F of the Exterior Design Standards in our Covenants and pages 40-43 of the Guidelines for Exterior Restoration.

Why does the OCA have architectural rules and are they ever updated?

We are a City-designated Historic District which means we are covered by the city's CHAP rules and regulations. In addition, the OCA has its own covenants that include guidance for exterior design. The purpose of the standards is to preserve the architectural character of the neighborhood. Guidance originated in the 1970's when the existing homes were sold by the City for \$1 with the conditions that they be renovated and owner-occupied. The City issued Guidelines for Exterior Restoration at that time and after input from the new property owners, that guidance was finalized and incorporated into our covenants.

The covenants are on a 10 year renewal cycle and the last required update was in 2018. At that time the OCA Board undertook a comprehensive revision in an attempt to allow more flexibility, while remaining faithful to the 19th Century design of our homes. The Board, ARC and CHAP worked collaboratively on a draft and then input was received from the community. Over 70% of our homeowners approved this revision.

Resources

[Application for Notice to Proceed](#)

[Historic Preservation Rules and Regulations \(CHAP Guidelines\)](#)

[Approval Process for Exterior Work](#)

[Covenants](#)

[Guidelines for Exterior Restoration](#)