

Parkside HOA Architectural and Landscaping Guidelines & Review Procedure

(Section 1)

Please read the summary of requirements below and then submit the online [Parkside HOA Architectural and Landscaping Review Request Form](#). If necessary, please add supporting documents such as paint samples, sketches, architectural plans, installer proposals, or product specifications. We generally respond within 2-7 business days because we are an all-volunteer board. Simple requests may be completed within a few days; complex requests may take several weeks or occasionally longer.

Please Note

- **Some guidelines have changed over the years to keep pace with new tastes, styles, legal requirements, and wildfire-safety practices. The purpose remains the same: maintain the character of the neighborhood, protect property values, and help avoid disagreements among neighbors.**
- Changes to the exterior of a house or property (not including your backyard unless it involves trees and landscaping) must be reviewed and approved by the Parkside Architectural and Landscaping Control Committee (ALCC) before work begins.
- Unacceptable or unapproved changes may have to be removed or redone at the owner's expense.

Current Committee Contacts

- Jana Murphy - 2489 Kalmia Ave. - 303-443-0307

What Needs to Be Reviewed

1. Building and Exterior Remodeling

Submit detailed plans and city approval for additions or major modifications. A simple description is generally adequate for smaller changes such as replacing windows or doors.

Changes to the exterior of a house or property must be reviewed and approved by the Parkside Architectural and Landscaping Control Committee (ALCC) before work begins, except for routine maintenance and minor landscaping within a homeowner's enclosed backyard.

Routine backyard work that does not require approval includes ordinary gardening, replacement of annuals or perennials, routine pruning, lawn maintenance, and replacement of existing plants with plants of a similar size and character.

Prior approval is required, regardless of whether the work is in the front, side, or backyard, when it involves:

- Removal or major pruning of a living tree;
- Planting a prohibited species;
- Fences, walls, gates, sheds, pergolas, decks, patios, permanent play structures, pools, spas, or other permanent exterior structures;
- Major grading, drainage, irrigation, hardscape, or ground-cover changes;

- Changes that may affect an easement, property boundary, neighboring property, HOA-owned or HOA-maintained property, common area, greenbelt, or utility access;
- Significant removal or relocation of established landscaping;
- Exterior lighting, mechanical equipment, solar equipment, or other installations visible from neighboring property, streets, greenbelts, or common areas; or
- Work that may materially affect wildfire safety, neighborhood character, or adjacent properties.
- **When uncertain whether approval is required, homeowners should contact the Committee before beginning work.**

2. Exterior Painting or Staining

Submit color chips or photographs of the proposed colors. Earth tones are preferred to match the character of the existing neighborhood.

Guidelines:

- Certain other colors may also be approved.
- **White or pastel body colors, such as pink and baby blue, are prohibited.**
- White trim is allowed with approval.
- **The presence of an existing unapproved color does not authorize its reuse.**

3. Fences

Submit a description showing the proposed materials, height, color, and location. Approval is conditioned on the fence complying with all Parkside HOA architectural requirements, including applicable height restrictions, and being installed without encroaching on neighboring property, HOA-owned or HOA-maintained property, common areas, established historical boundaries, or recorded easements.

A survey obtained by a homeowner does not, by itself, change an established boundary, resolve a boundary dispute, or authorize the use of property that has historically been treated or maintained as belonging to another homeowner or the HOA.

Guidelines:

- Fences may be no higher than 6 feet, although shorter fences are encouraged.
- Under the covenants, fences should be designed and approved as an integral part of the design of the house.
- Old fences are a significant negative attribute in the neighborhood. Street-facing fences should therefore be stained or painted to match or complement the house.
- Fire Marshals recommend creating a 5-foot non-wood buffer on all sides of a house. This may require coordination with a neighbor. The HOA encourages neighborly discussions about creating fire-resistant breaks in fencing or any other issue.
- Metal fencing may be considered. However, highly reflective fencing and chain-link fencing, including galvanized or vinyl-coated chain link, **are not permitted anywhere in Parkside.**
- Solid or semi-solid metal fence panels may be used for short sections near the house or for the entire fence for wildfire mitigation, provided that:
 - The color is a neutral, muted tone consistent with neighborhood character.
 - The design is simple and modern, such as flat, slatted, or subtly perforated, and is visually integrated with the house and existing fence **and not chain link.**
 - Any transition to wood fencing is handled cleanly, with aligned heights and consistent posts or framing.

4. Trees, Landscaping and Wildfire Resilience

Trees make up the character of Parkside and add value to our neighborhood and properties. Landscaping and Wildfire Resilience also plays an important part in property values. Therefore, submit

a simple landscape plan or sketch showing new, removed, or relocated plantings and any changes to hardscape or ground cover.

Guidelines:

- Landscaping should look natural and fit the character of the neighborhood.
- White gravel and painted or highly reflective landscaping elements are not permitted.
- Review the Parkside Landscape and Vegetation Guidelines in Section 2 of this document.
- Also review the City of Boulder Wildfire-Resilient Landscapes Guide: [City of Boulder Wildfire-Resilient Landscapes Guide](#)
- Homeowners working with the City of Boulder or wildfire-mitigation services may submit related tree and other high-fire-risk vegetation changes for review. The Committee will generally look favorably on reasonable mitigation measures that reduce fire risk while maintaining neighborhood character.
- The Association encourages wildfire-resilient landscaping consistent with City of Boulder and Boulder County guidance.
- If you are unsure whether a tree or other vegetation belongs to you or to the HOA, contact the Committee. We can help determine responsibility and, when useful, connect you with knowledgeable gardeners or wildfire-aware neighbors.

5. Roofing

Submit a description of the proposed roofing material and color.

Guidelines:

- Maintain the neighborhood's natural, earth-tone character.
- All new roofs and new home construction in Parkside must comply with current City of Boulder building, energy, and wildfire-mitigation codes, including permitted Class A fire-resistant roofing. [City of Boulder Roof Inspection Guide](#)
- A City permit is required for new or replacement roof coverings.
- Metal Roofs are encouraged for wildlife resilience. The color must be a neutral, muted tone consistent with neighborhood character. No shiny metal roofs.
- Composite shingles and other materials with a similar, non-reflective appearance are acceptable.
- Preferred colors are muted earth tones such as tan, brown, and warm or neutral gray.
- **Bold shades of blue, green, red, and other bright colors are not allowed.**
- Black or charcoal may be approved when it complements the overall house color scheme, although lighter earth tones are preferred.
- Cedar shakes are no longer allowed in Boulder and will not be approved.

6. Electric Vehicle Charging Systems

For exterior installations, submit a quick sketch and a description showing materials, height, color, and location.

Guidelines:

- Electric vehicle chargers are permitted and encouraged for individual homeowners, consistent with Colorado law.
- Chargers must be installed by a licensed electrician with all required permits.
- Installations must not create tripping hazards, block access, or violate fire code. Cords may not cross sidewalks, shared drives or impinge on neighboring properties.
- Exterior equipment and conduit must be low-profile and painted or finished to blend with the house. Front-facing installations may require additional screening.

7. Solar Energy Systems

The City of Boulder permits residential solar systems subject to City zoning, building, electrical, fire-safety, and solar-access requirements. Homeowners must obtain all required City permits and review

the City's solar guidance before applying to the HOA. City approval does not replace required Parkside HOA review.

[City of Boulder: How to Go Solar](#)

[City of Boulder: Solar Access Guide](#)

What to Submit:

For **permanent roof-mounted, ground-mounted, freestanding, or canopy-mounted systems**, submit:

- A roof or site plan showing panel locations.
- Photographs or drawings showing how the system will look from the street and neighboring properties.
- Panel dimensions, height, color, and mounting details.
- Locations of conduit, batteries, inverters, and other exterior equipment.
- The installer's proposal and product specifications.
- Any related tree removal, landscaping, or structural changes.

Parkside Guidelines:

- Roof-mounted panels are strongly preferred for permanent solar installations.
- Panels should follow the roofline, remain low-profile, and be arranged neatly.
- Panels, frames, conduit, and equipment should use non-reflective or low-glare finishes where commercially available.
- Equipment should be placed in the least-visible practical location that still allows the system to function effectively.
- Installations should minimize unreasonable glare, shading, and visual impacts on neighboring properties.
- The Committee may consider height, placement, visibility, glare, shading, and effects on streets, greenbelts, and common areas.
- A neighbor's objection or loss of a preferred view does not automatically prevent approval.

Ground-Mounted Systems:

Ground-mounted, freestanding, or canopy-mounted systems require additional review. The applicant must explain why a reasonably effective roof-mounted system is not feasible.

The Committee will consider:

- Height and setbacks.
- Visibility and screening.
- Glare and shading.
- Lot coverage, easements, drainage, and utilities.
- Effects on trees, landscaping, and neighboring properties.
- Whether the system would be placed on or encroach upon HOA-owned or HOA-maintained property, which is not permitted.

Portable Plug-In Solar Systems

Portable plug-in solar systems are permitted subject to Colorado law. Before installation, the homeowner must notify the Committee and provide the product information, proposed location, and mounting method.

- Equipment must be safety-certified, installed according to manufacturer instructions, and comply with applicable electrical, building, and fire-safety requirements.
- Panels and equipment must be securely mounted and remain entirely within the homeowner's property.
- Systems may not obstruct walkways, gates, emergency exits, utility equipment, drainage areas, easements, or common property.

- Panels and related equipment must use non-reflective or low-glare finishes where commercially available and must not create unreasonable glare affecting neighboring properties, streets, or common areas.
- Installations must be neat, orderly, and placed in the least-visible practical location that still allows the system to function effectively.
- Placement in more than one location is permitted when reasonably necessary for solar access or system operation.
- Wiring must be secured and reasonably concealed. Improvised supports such as pallets, loose blocks, tarps, or unfinished lumber are not permitted.
- Batteries or energy-storage equipment must be approved for use with the system and comply with applicable safety requirements.
- Damaged, unsafe, abandoned, or poorly maintained equipment must be repaired or removed.

Owner Responsibility:

- The homeowner is responsible for permits, installation, maintenance, repairs, removal, and restoration of affected property.
- Colorado law allows reasonable HOA design requirements but limits restrictions that significantly increase cost or reduce system performance. A complete application will be approved or denied within the period required by law.

8. Fire Pits and Open Burning

As of 2026, fire pits and open burning are not allowed within the City of Boulder under the City's permanent burn ban. This includes portable outdoor fire pits, burning piles, and bonfires of any size or type involving flammable material. The exemption identified by the City is the use of a safety flare, such as a road flare, to indicate danger to the public.

[City of Boulder: Burning Within City Limits](#)

9. Hardscape, Concrete, Driveways, Walkways and Patios

Prior approval is required for new or materially altered driveways, walkways, patios, courtyards, and other visible hardscape.

Please submit: a photo of the existing area and information showing the proposed material, color, finish, dimensions, and any changes to grading or drainage.

Guidelines:

- Materials and finishes should be compatible with the home and neighborhood character.
- Neutral, natural-looking, non-reflective finishes are preferred.
- Work must not create drainage problems or affect neighboring property, easements, utilities, or HOA-owned or maintained areas.
- Routine repair or resurfacing that substantially maintains the existing location, dimensions, color, and appearance may receive expedited review.
- Replacement or resurfacing that materially changes the color, finish, dimensions, drainage, footprint, or appearance requires full review before work begins.
- Approval is based on the specific project submitted and does not establish a precedent requiring approval of similar projects elsewhere in the neighborhood.

Parkside HOA Landscape and Vegetation Guidelines

(Section 2)

Landscaping plays important aesthetic, environmental and property value roles within Parkside. These requirements and recommendations are intended to balance these considerations. Given the increased risk of wildfire, Parkside is prioritizing safer, fire-resistant landscaping while maintaining the overall character of the neighborhood. Contact the Committee with questions or concerns.

Prohibited

- **Cottonwood Trees** are not prohibited throughout Boulder. However, because of their mature size, aggressive roots, maintenance concerns, cotton production, **and potential limb-failure risks**, Parkside HOA does not permit the planting of new cottonwood trees.
- Planting any new species of **juniper (*Juniperus* spp.) is prohibited**, consistent with [City of Boulder requirements](#).

Highly Discouraged Due to Wildfire Hazard

- **Existing junipers:** Removal is strongly recommended because of their high flammability and may be required as part of certain City-permitted development or redevelopment projects.
- In general, **vegetation that is oily, resinous, extremely dense, or filled with dead thatch**.

High-risk, fire-spreading shrubs and plants commonly include:

- Arborvitae (Thuja) - dense, often dry or resinous foliage that can act as vertical fuel.
- Certain cedars and cypresses - similar to juniper in oil content and structure.
- Bamboo clumps - dry leaves and hollow canes can promote rapid flame spread.
- Gorse and Scotch or French broom - highly flammable, oil-heavy, and often identified as invasive or a fire hazard.
- Oleander - toxic and resinous; it can burn intensely.
- Pampas grass and large ornamental grasses left uncut - tall, dry fuel that can readily throw embers.

Discouraged When Unmanaged

These plants are not inherently prohibited, but they can become wildfire hazards when dense, unpruned, or planted immediately adjacent to structures:

- Boxwood, privet, yew, cotoneaster, and photinia - evergreen hedges that may accumulate dead interior material.
- Overgrown lilac, spirea, potentilla, barberry, and similar shrubs - particularly when woody, full of dead twigs, or surrounded by leaf litter.
- Tall clumping grasses such as miscanthus, maiden grass, and feather reed grass - generally manageable if cut down hard every winter and kept away from buildings, but hazardous when left as dry standing straw.

Helpful Practices

- Keep shrubs at least 5 feet from the house or interrupt that area with rock, pavers, or other non-combustible materials.
- Avoid continuous fuel ladders connecting grass to shrubs and shrubs to trees.

- Thin hedge interiors, remove dead material, limb shrubs up from the ground, and clear debris from the property and gutters.
- Avoid planting vegetation that smells strongly resinous when crushed or burns and crackles readily.
- Consult knowledgeable local nursery staff about fire-resistant plants and wildfire-smart landscaping.

Examples of Wildfire-Smart Landscaping

- Create a non-combustible zone within the first 3-5 feet of the home using rock, stone, pavers, or other non-flammable materials instead of wood mulch or dense shrubs.
- Avoid wooden fencing that touches your house or a neighbor's house. Consider replacing approximately the first 5 feet next to structures with non-combustible fencing or materials. Continuous fencing can act as a wick carrying fire between homes.
- Favor fire-resistant plants and avoid long, continuous hedges directly against structures. Junipers are discouraged.
- Regularly remove dead branches, ladder fuels, accumulated leaf litter, and gutter debris.

Tree and Major Vegetation Removal Approvals

- Removal or major trimming of living trees and major vegetation requires prior approval under Section 1, Landscaping and Wildfire Resilience.
- The Committee will generally look favorably on reasonable wildfire-mitigation work recommended by the City of Boulder, Boulder County wildfire programs, a Fire Marshal, or a qualified arborist when the work also maintains the neighborhood's overall character and canopy.
- When requesting HOA support for removal, provide the wildfire-mitigation assessment, Fire Marshal recommendation, or qualified arborist report, including the contact information used to arrange the assessment.
- Tree removal is expensive, often approximately \$5,000 per tree depending on size and complexity. HOA-funded requests are subject to annual budgeting and will be considered in the order received, based on the supporting recommendation, urgency, and available funds.