

## **Neighborhood Standards Guidelines**

**OVERVIEW:** One of the primary goals of the Hills HOA is to improve general appearances throughout the neighborhood. Our governing documents assign responsibilities to the Hills HOA board along with the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) to maintain and uphold Neighborhood Standards.

There are certain general “Neighborhood Standards” that the Hills HOA believes are fundamental to maintaining our homes, lots, sidewalks, streets, and common areas. Although this “Neighborhood Standards Guidelines” document is not meant to be all-inclusive, it is intended to supplement and support the Hills at Firewheel Estates Homeowners Association governing documents (including Article VIII of the existing Declaration of Covenants), as well as City of Garland code, 190 overlay standards, state statutes, and any other instruments that impact the Hill’s aesthetic, structural, and maintenance standards.

### **EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE**

One of the best ways to maintain Neighborhood Standards is by regularly using conscientious and sound maintenance practices throughout your property for Landscaping, Painting, and Fence Repair, as well as Yard/Driveway/Alleyway/Home Exterior Cleanliness.

**Landscaping.** The HOA board and the ACC provides the following Neighborhood Standards as guidelines for landscaping and yard maintenance:

- For appearance and safety, landscaping shall be maintained on a regular basis. Trees and bushes shall not block or overhang sidewalks or alleys so as to interfere with pedestrians, bikes, strollers, vehicles, or other passage. Trees, ornamentals, ground cover, vines, and other vegetation shall be properly maintained and trimmed, including on and around fences. Weeds shall be controlled and grass mowed and trimmed, including along alleyways. Trees and vegetation shall be properly pruned so as not to encroach or cause damage to adjacent properties or homes.
- If yard erosion is occurring that washes dirt onto sidewalks, streets, curbs, or alleyways, it is the homeowner’s responsibility to promptly remove dirt/mud to prevent slippage and other safety hazards. In yard areas devoid of ground cover, efforts to regrow grass are highly encouraged.
- Irrigation systems shall be kept in good repair to prevent wasted water from damaged or missing heads, lines, etc.
- Dead trees, bushes/ornamentals shall be removed promptly, and if resident desires, replaced. If trees are removed, stumps shall be removed, or grinding below ground level is acceptable.
- Landscape beds and/or tree rings constructed of stone, rock, brick, or other masonry materials must not be allowed to sag, tilt, or collapse. Masonry landscape bed borders and tree rings are generally discouraged because they tend to deteriorate by soil settling and root system growth. However if used, such materials should include a reinforced concrete footing and be mortared into place.
- Repairs are expected as needed on brick mailboxes and brickwork that walkways.
- Homeowners will make reasonable efforts to control household and yard insects and pests.
- The HOA asks that you always use good judgment and consider your neighbors when planning landscaping projects. For example, if you want to conserve water usage by installing a rock/desert yard with no grass, that sort of alteration is not common in the neighborhood and will require special HOA consideration.

**Painting.** The HOA board and the ACC summarizes the following conditions as the Neighborhood Standards for painting (and staining for fences).

- When paint is cracking or peeling on trim, doors, shutters, or elsewhere, it is time to paint.
- Exterior paint colors are limited to the range of colors used by the original home builders which are, in general, neutral earth tones. If you are changing paint colors (either the primary or trim color), you will need to submit a formal request for approval from the HOA.

- Brick may not be painted. Brick is low maintenance until you paint it. Since there will most likely be future owners of your home, the HOA cannot allow brick to be painted.
- Driveways and sidewalks may not be painted. Fences may be stained, but not painted.

### Fences

- City of Garland Code (Chapter 30, Building Inspection, Article X. FENCES. Sec. 30.207, Maintenance) states that it shall unlawful to allow a fence to lean more than 10 degrees or to have missing, loose, or broken pickets, slats or panels.
- Repairs and maintenance to meet City code are required.
- In addition, while it is possible to repair fences and gates, at some point, age and general condition necessitate replacement. When general appearance and condition does not conform to the standards of fences/gates at other homes in the neighborhood, replacement will be required.
- Posts must be installed so that they are not visible from the street (visible in the alley is OK). When replacing posts, the ACC strongly recommends metal posts to prevent warping and to extend fence longevity.
- **Fences may be stained, but not painted!**

### OTHER GENERAL EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

- Keep all exterior structures, amenities, and additions in good and aesthetic condition. Promptly repair or replace any broken or missing shingles, shutters, screens, vents, fences, lights (including along walkways), bricks that line sidewalks, masonry, retaining walls, tree rings and landscape bed borders, etc. Please ensure that your brick mailbox is in good condition and is not leaning excessively.
- Please do not leave any items hanging over fences so that they are visible from the street, sidewalk, alley or a neighbor's yard.
- Please do not store, abandon, stack, or place any materials, tools, equipment, appliances, trash, pallets, toys, etc. in yards, driveways, areas between homes, or easements so they are visible.
- Please be sure that trash, brush, and other discarded items are placed at the curb as near as possible to the City scheduled pick-up day (Wednesday). Roll trash cans back from the alley (or street in the case of front entry garages) as soon as possible after City pick-up.

### NEW EXTERIOR PROJECTS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Our neighborhood's governing documents mandate that all exterior changes require an Architectural Request Form submission. However as a matter of practicality and convenience, the ACC and Hills HOA board have agreed that many projects are relatively routine and some projects will no longer require a formal submission. **The HOA and ACC have prepared and adopted a separate "Blanket Approvals" document for these types of projects.** See the Hills HOA "Blanket Approvals for Standard Neighborhood Projects" posted at hillshoa.com for more details. Or, contact the HOA board for a copy.

**Even with the Blanket Approvals guidelines, the following exterior Changes ALWAYS require a formal HOA request for approval; projects include (but are not limited to):**

- |                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • General Construction | • Pools                     |
| • Home Additions       | • Solar Panels (Collectors) |
| • Decks                | • Patio Covers              |
| • Storage Sheds        |                             |

**To submit a request for any project**, please access the Excel Association Management web site at: <http://www.excelam.com>.

Click "Excel Association Mgmt." in left column, then see "Residence Resources" column (center of page). Then click the "Architectural Request" link. If you need additional assistance, call Excel at 972-881-7488. Note that forms must be submitted AND approved BEFORE the project begins.

**Architectural Control Committee Request Forms are also available on the Hills web site at: [hillshoa.com](http://hillshoa.com)**