



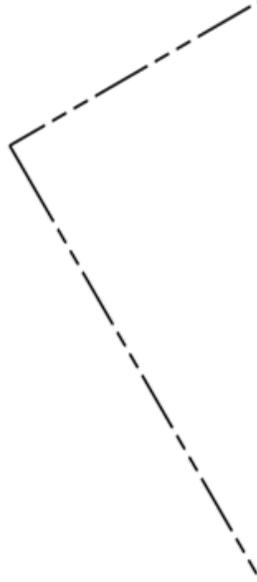
# single-family DESIGN GUIDELINES

## Village of Arlington Heights

Planning & Community Development Department

Approved by the Design Commission & The Ordinance Review Committee on Teardowns

October 20, 2004



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# 1 introduction

The Design Guidelines were prepared by the Village of Arlington Heights Planning & Community Development Department with input from the Ordinance Review Committee on Teardowns, Design Commission, local residents, and local architects. These guidelines have been approved by the Design Commission and the Ordinance Review Committee on Teardowns.

The guidelines have been developed to respond to the recent increase of single family re-development occurring in the Village. It is the intent of the guidelines to serve as an educational tool early in the design process of a residential project. It is critical to utilize the guidelines prior to commencing a residential project in Arlington Heights. The guidelines are to assist the Design Commission and the Village staff towards providing creative positive design solutions to improve the aesthetic quality of single family residences in Arlington Heights.

*The guidelines are not intended to take the place of the Arlington Heights Municipal Code.*

The guidelines are divided into sections beginning with a larger discussion of defining a neighborhood. The first sections focus on the overall neighborhood and surveying of the neighborhood. It then leads into the block and the character of the block. The guidelines examine issues such as volume, bulk and scale. Also covered are areas specific as good detailing. Finally, there is a section on garages and the relationship to the site, successful additions, and landscaping of the frontyard.

For all non-single family developments please refer to the separate Design Guidelines dated Spring 1995.

## jurisdiction

All work undertaken by a public agency and privately owned properties within the Village of Arlington Heights, are covered by these Design Guidelines.

## approval

No approval shall be given for the development, rehabilitation, or exterior modification of any building, structure, or improvement on any parcel subject to a building permit until the proposed development or redevelopment conforms to the Design Guidelines.

## questions

If there are questions on the guidelines or the Design Commission process, please give the Department of Planning and Community Development a call at 847-368-5200.

## **purpose**

The purpose of the Design Guidelines is to provide professional standards to evaluate improvements in the Village of Arlington Heights. Neighborhood and architectural elements include, but are not limited to:

- *evaluation of how the proposed home fits in with the character of the existing neighborhood*
- *relationship of the proposed structure to its site and adjacent homes*
- *site plan and building orientation, site treatment including site layout*
- *review of the elevations*
- *external architectural features of buildings and structures, including bulk, massing & volume*
- *evaluation of materials*

The guidelines are provided to assist developers, architects, residents, Design Commission members and staff in the Planning and Community Development Department work towards creative design solutions to heighten the visual appearance throughout the Village of Arlington Heights.

## **evaluation criteria**

The following factors and characteristics relating to a development govern the Design Commission's evaluation of a design submission:

- *conformance to current ordinances of the Village of Arlington Heights*
- *conformance to the Comprehensive Plan*
- *logic of the design*
- *architectural character as it relates to the neighborhood*
- *overall composition and balance of the elevation*
- *material selection*
- *harmony and compatibility to adjacent structures*

# 2

## fitting in with the neighborhood

### step 1: analyze your neighborhood

Begin by analyzing your neighborhood.

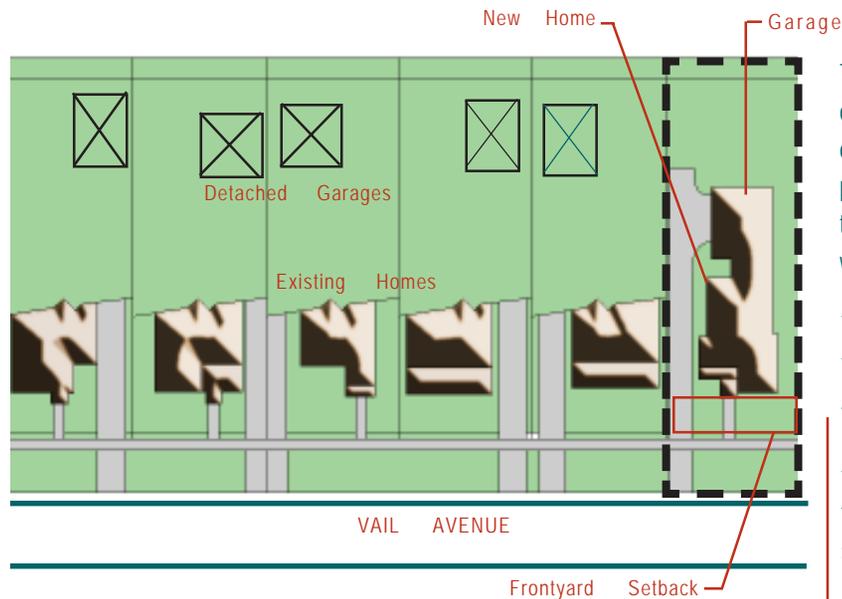
Map out each of the homes, with photo documentation. What is the history and evolution of your neighborhood? Evaluate general characteristics such as heights, setbacks for the front and side yards. What is the character to the street? Is the street wide and open with the homes predominantly setback or is it narrow and tight with homes coming up close to the street?

### step 2: scale of homes

What are the scale of the homes? Are the homes of a modest mass, with one story entries? Are the homes on the block of a larger character? Are there newer homes in the neighborhood, and how do they appear to fit in?

### step 3: architectural elements

Take a closer look at architectural elements in your neighborhood. Are there enclosed or open porches? Does the overall neighborhood have detached or recessed garages? Is there a roof pitch that prevails in the neighborhood?



This aerial diagram shows a typical neighborhood close to the downtown on Vail Avenue. This neighborhood is characteristic of narrow lots with detached garages located to the rear of the property. The frontyard setback is also a definitive feature in this neighborhood, and helps to reinforce the narrow street with houses coming up close to the street.

The new home on the street respects the setback line created by the existing homes, by taking in the average frontyard setback. Although the home does not have a detached garage to the rear, it locates the garage attached and to the rear of the home. Placing the garage to the rear of the property places emphasis on the front elevation of the home, allowing porches to characterize the street, thus respecting a strong character of the neighborhood.

## deferring to the neighborhood

"Siting a house in an existing neighborhood or subdivision ultimately has implications beyond your own property line. This doesn't mean that every house in the neighborhood has to be the same---that would be boring. It's more that each house seems to be speaking in the same language, using the same vocabulary. In architecture, like the spoken word, you can speak the same language but say different things.

Even in a densely packed neighborhood, a house can simultaneously fit in and stand out on a site.

The houses are *variations* on a theme."

*Jeremiah Eck  
The Distictive Home*



*b. 1904, 2 story,  
frame construction*



*b. 1920, 2 story, frame  
construction*



*b. 1925, 1-1/2 story, frame  
construction*

east side

VAIL AVENUE

west side



*b. 1904, 2 story, frame  
construction*



*b. 2002, 2 story, frame &  
masonry construction*



*early 1900s, 1-1/2 story, frame  
construction with stucco*

A photo documentation and historical analysis of the neighborhood reveals its evolution over the last 100 years. Although the neighborhood has seen many changes, there are consistent architectural qualities present in the existing neighborhood. For example, the roof slope and the dormer. Although each dormer is not the same size or style, the overall presence of dormers adds character and charm to the street. Another distinctive quality are the raised front porches. The porches lend to a strong dialogue between the street and the homes. Often on a nice summer day, you can see people relaxing on the front porch talking to their neighbors.

# 3 visual preference survey

## step 4: architectural elements

Take a survey of your proposed design and how it would blend into the existing neighborhood. Many established neighborhoods have a fabric that can be worked with. For example, the homes built below are on the same street, but have been built over the last 80 years. Although some are newer, they have similar features such as the roof line and the porch which helps to integrate the homes. Other neighborhoods in Arlington Heights have been built as subdivision ranch homes in the post war years. A new home in this type of neighborhood may try to mimic the low roofline or soften the edges or shoulders of the design. The survey should be utilized as a tool before embarking on your project and should be used to fairly critique and self-evaluate your project.



### overall neighborhood

Is the house appropriate for the neighborhood?	1	2	3	4	5
Does the house negatively impact adjacent homes?	1	2	3	4	5
Is the house too big for the lot?	1	2	3	4	5
Is the house too close to the next house?	1	2	3	4	5
Would 2 teardowns next to each other with the same massing be out of character for the neighborhood?	1	2	3	4	5
Does the back of the home extend into the rear lot beyond adjacent homes?	YES			NO	
If YES to the above statement, is this a problem?	1	2	3	4	5

### design characteristics

Does the roofline vary?	1	2	3	4	5
Is the height appropriate with neighborhood?	1	2	3	4	5
Does the house use details borrowed from neighborhood?	1	2	3	4	5



### neighborhoods

Consistency in design and detailing is always important but is imperative when designing for a neighborhood; views are often territorial. To create visual value and character, all elevations of a home must be designed as if they were the front door. The pursuit of desirable neighborhoods and communities is a collective effort and requires cooperation of all parties, including neighborly etiquette in co-developing beautiful homes with a true sense of place.

Does the garage take up a large percentage of the front?	1	2	3	4	5
Does the impervious coverage constitute a large portion of the site?	1	2	3	4	5
Is the massing of the home articulated?	1	2	3	4	5
Is the front entry well designed?	1	2	3	4	5
Are there elements such as a front porch, dormers, & bay windows which contribute to the scale?	1	2	3	4	5
Are the materials used on the home appropriate?	1	2	3	4	5
Does landscaping contribute to neighborhood quality?	1	2	3	4	5
How is the overall appearance?	1	2	3	4	5

The New Bungalow  
 Essays by Bialecki, Gladu, Kessenich,  
 McCord, Bacon

# 4 mass, bulk & volume



*An example of a newer two story home in a one story neighborhood.*



*a new home in an existing neighborhood: although this is a two story home in an existing one story neighborhood the entry is a one story element and brings the mass of the home down.*

## size versus design

Creating a home appropriate to the neighborhood and using space thoughtfully and purposefully can happen on any scale. It is how you break the sum of the parts. For example, a new two story home with walls that go straight up, with some windows punched in to allow light and a gable roof may provide the square footage and bulk but may not fit in with the existing neighborhood. The same home with the garage pushed back, a porch on the front, a variety of roof lines and upper story setbacks will start to fit in better with its neighbors.

## good neighbors

“Making the new house an exact replica of neighboring homes was not the goal. But by duplicating certain stylistic traits, such as roof slope, window alignments, and the scale of the house facade, the new home would seem a natural and integrated part of the existing fabric of the community. ...The exterior has an understated confidence that lets it blend in with its neighbors while still maintaining its own distinctive character.”

*Sarah Susanka  
Creating The Not So Big House*

## one story elements

A two story home can break up a large mass by introducing one story elements. These elements are:

- front porch
- bringing the roofline down
- scaled down entry
- projecting bays

What may visually appear as a large volume, is now more enunciated and expressive. In other words, the bulk of the home is broken into smaller parts. Notice how the large windows on the first floor relate to the porch as well as the street.



*a two story home with a one story impression*



*the front porch wraps to the side*

## materials

A house can be enlivened by variations in materials and colors. Using a combination of materials such as masonry, siding, shingles helps a good composition and breaks up a potentially large bulky home.



*side elevation with a projecting bay*

## articulation

A newer home can become a better neighbor by breaking up the side elevations. Articulation can occur at many levels of design. The front elevation can have relief, but the sides of the home can be scaled down as well. On this home, a front porch is wrapped around the side. The mass above the garage has a shed dormer on the side elevation. In addition, windows have been added to the garage side.



*side elevation above the garage*

# 5 roof form & height



A variety of roof forms is introduced; hip roof, gable roof

The roof is proportioned to the overall home

An eyebrow dormer adds interest & breaks up a large roof span

A sloping roof line helps to relate to adjacent neighbors by coming down to the one story level.

The main living mass is broken into three smaller components

## height and neighborhood context

The height of the proposed building or addition should be determined by neighboring homes and neighborhood character. If there is a uniform height for all or most of the block, the new home or addition should be compatible with it. The new building or addition need not always be the same height as its neighbors but it should visually relate to the established roof line.



## height as an impression

In a neighborhood of modest homes, a home which is taller than its adjacent neighbors may create an overpowering statement. Height is measured in two ways:

- as defined by the Village code
- and the overall perception of height and how it relates to the character of the existing neighborhood

The home in this example has a gable roof form with many details and moldings:

- wide horizontal trim to add interest and to visually break-up the roof form
- crafted wood trim on the end of the gable with cantilevering supports



The prairie style example uses a low pitched roof with large overhangs. The overall impression is on the form of the home rather than the roof. Gutter & trim details are used to carry the eye across rather than up.

This home has a combination of forms, hip and gables to break up a large volume. A wide horizontal trim piece between the 1st and 2nd floor helps break-up the form. The house is at the existing grade to relate to adjacent homes.

This teardown home successfully relates to the adjacent ranch style homes by sloping the roof line to appear as a one story. Dormers and trim detail are incorporated to add interest and character.



# 6 garages & relationship to the site

## siting the garage

In planning a layout for the site, there are many options for garage placement on the site. Early in the design process, a homeowner and the architect can evaluate the neighborhood for:

- Is the placement of the garage compatible to the neighborhood?
- Does the garage take up a large portion of the front elevation?
- How will the placement of the garage have a bearing on existing trees?



*The garage is attached and towards the rear, placing emphasis on the home.*



*The garage is side loaded, with appropriately placed landscaping to de-emphasize the garage mass.*

## wider lots:

The homeowner took advantage of the width of the lot, 100' wide, to design a side loaded garage. From the front elevation, the garage seems a part of the house, with generous placement of windows. To further break-up the garage mass, a series of dormers are placed over the garage which match the detailing of the rest of the house.

## narrow lots

On a small narrow lot, this homeowner detached the garage. The details of the garage match the details of the principal home. The homeowner carefully located the driveway so as to protect and preserve the existing trees in the neighborhood.



## courtyard style garage

This home incorporates a 3 car garage as a courtyard style, so that only one garage is visible from the street. The remaining two garages are incorporated as side-loads in the mass of the home. Additional care has been taken on the selection of a wood frame carriage style garage door with lites.

### garage options:

tandem garage,  
side loaded garage,  
front load garage,  
detached garage,  
attached to the rear,  
courtyard style garage

## front load garage

The garage in this example is a front load 2 car garage. The garage is incorporated in the volume of the home, thus minimizing its appearance.



## garage proportion to the facade

Garages which take up a large portion of the front facade should be avoided. The emphasis should be on the entry and home rather than the garage.

## relationship to elevation

The garage is incorporated as a portecochere; a carriageway with a dormer above leads through the house to a courtyard in the rear where a detached garage is located.



# 7

## additions

### successful elements

This addition introduces a second story directly above, while keeping the modest character of the neighborhood.

The shed roof element ties the masonry on the first floor with the new dryvit material on the second floor.

Since this is a corner lot with two street frontages, the home elevations respond to both streets.

Care has been taken to bring the landscaping to the side yard and the front yard.

Although portions of the new addition are evident, there is detail and transitioning between varying materials. This helps the house turn the corner and in essence gives the home two well thought out elevations.



*new addition: a well balanced new facade and elevation*



### Relationship of buildings to the site & adjacent areas

Buildings will reflect and improve the character of the site and the neighborhood upon which they are located. New additions will look like they belong and not dominate or change the character of the original building.

Designers shall demonstrate a harmony in texture, lines and masses between adjacent buildings. Monotony will be avoided.

Height, scale, and proportion of each building will be compatible with its site and adjoining buildings.



## character & quaintness

The existing neighborhood for this home is eclectic, with homes ranging from ranches to french country to colonials. Although the owner grew out of the existing 900 square foot ranch, they used the existing foundation to build a second story addition. The homeowner has sensitively placed the new addition into the existing neighborhood by employing:

- an enhanced entry feature
- incorporating the garage into the home mass
- preserving existing trees on the lot
- applying materials that fit into the context

the driveway is linked to the entry through landscaping & pavement

the entry is made prominent with the use of repetitive columns

the turret above the entry carries your eye vertically and makes the entry a distinct feature



before: a typical ranch home



after: a well articulated and composed front elevation



### dormer details

a contrasting trim on the dormer sets off the siding  
additional crafted trim pieces break up the dormer

# 8 front yard landscaping



Use plantings near the proposed home in order to highlight architectural features and character such as an entry. Utilize groundcover, vines, and perennials balanced with turf, which offer texture and interest to the landscaping. Consider views from the neighbors and use a hedge to soften the impact of the home. You can often define the scale of the home through the use of landscaping and minimize the overall mass.

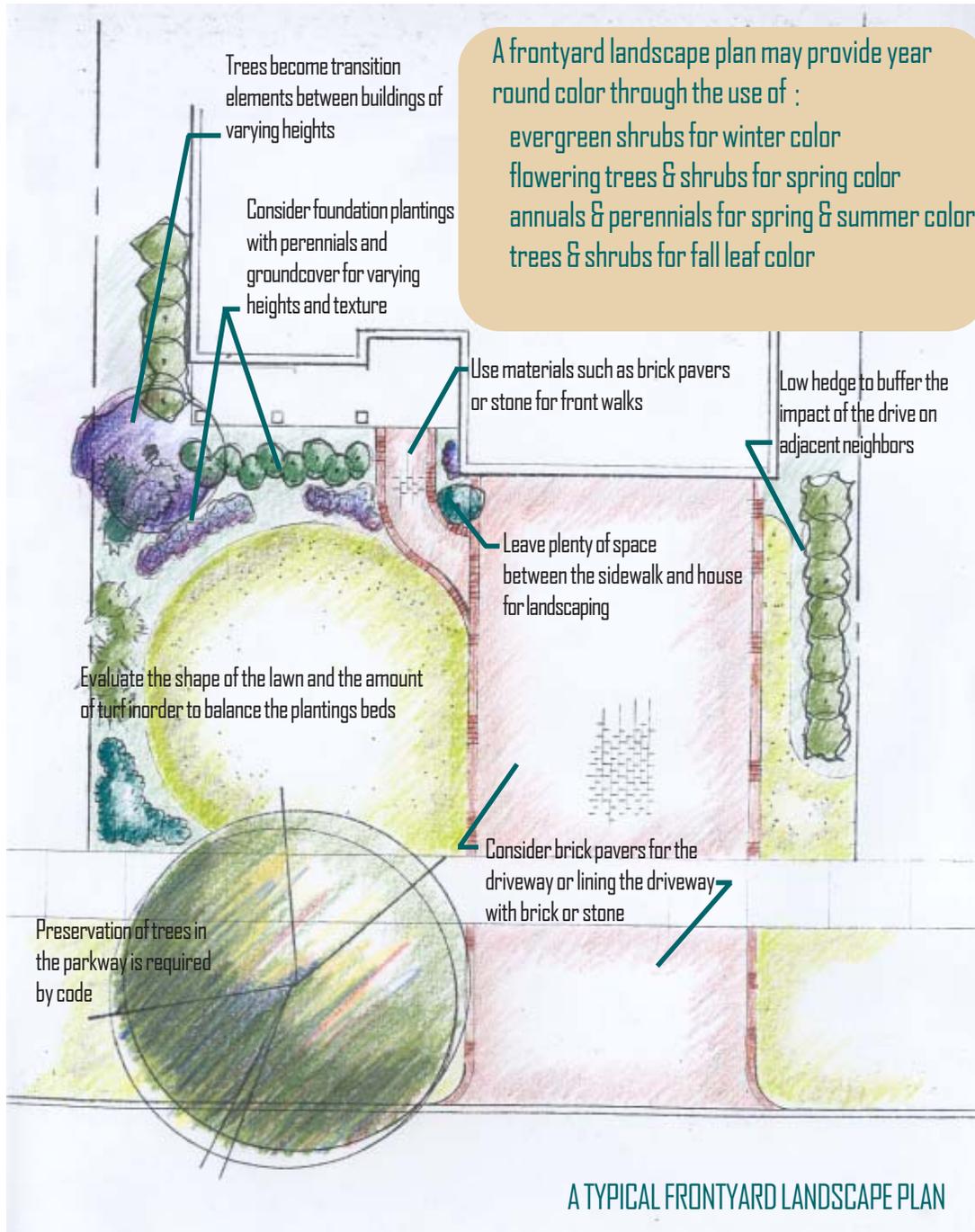
## winter color

Who says there is no color in winter?..looking in my neighborhood reminded me that there is a lot of color in the winter landscape that we just don't think about. ...look at the barberries and spireas with their red-black and red-brown stems, respectively and of course, willows, kerrias, and colored-stemmed dogwoods are easily recognized. Evergreens may be taken for granted, but they, too, add colors such as blue, silver, yellow, bronzed, and naturally green!

Take some time to recognize those winter shapes and colors that keep the landscape marching along in a progression of change.

*Pam Duthie  
Continuous Color*

**good landscaping will** provide a setting for a house and will help knit the new home into an existing neighborhood. When designing front yard landscaping, various plant material should be utilized which include, trees, shrubs and perennials. Materials such as brick or stone, which complement the exterior of the home, should be considered for the front walk and driveway. Conservation of existing trees, along with new plantings, is an essential element in good planning and a successful landscape design.



It is recommended that the front yard landscape plan include and identify:

- proposed plantings, including the species, quantities, and installed sizes on a site plan

- existing & proposed fences & retaining walls, including heights and type of material

- identify hardscape material

# tree preservation

Protecting existing trees on the lot can minimize the effects of a new home. The trees can provide a buffer and better help the new home fit into the neighborhood.

The location of the existing trees should be considered when locating the house, garage, driveways and any hard surfaces. To help mitigate the loss of trees, consider changing the footprint of the building, angling the structure, curving the driveway or walkway.

In order to avoid root damage and preserve trees avoid the following:

- altering the existing grade
- severing of the roots
- removing nutrient rich topsoil
- drying out roots by reduced soil depth
- smothering roots by increased soil depth

## protection during construction:

Prior to construction, barriers such as snow fencing should be employed to keep construction equipment outside of the root zone or a drip line must be implemented. When it is not feasible to use fencing due to space constraints, spread several inches of wood chips. Avoid storage or movement of equipment, material, debris or fill within the fenced tree protection area.

## adding value & enhancement:

Trees and shrubs contribute to property values by enhancing the appearance, screening unsightly views, and cutting energy. Careful planning and coordination with a tree-care specialist and the builder can reduce damage to existing trees, allowing trees to be incorporated into the overall design.



*The garage is carefully landscaped to provide a screen to the side-loaded garage.*



*The homeowner of this residence took care to preserve existing trees by building the home around the existing trees. The trees soften the effect of a new home and help to frame views to and from the home.*

## Preliminary steps

Begin with a survey of your neighborhood and documenting your site.

Obtain code requirements for your zoning district.

Meet with an architect and develop options for site plans.

Have an architect do sketch elevations. Do the sketches blend in with the neighborhood? Evaluate your design with the code and these guidelines.

Does the design you are proposing need fine tuning to fit in with the neighborhood and the code?

## Feedback & Review

Set up a preliminary meeting with Design Commission liaison for feedback on the design. A preliminary meeting with the Design Commission may also be requested. Obtain the Design Commission application & procedures.

Does the design meet the zoning codes or will a variance be required? If a variance is required, meet with the Zoning Board of Appeals liaison.

DC approval is required to be completed prior to ZBA review of variations.

Involve your neighbors in the process. Let them know about your project and design.

## Design Development

Review building permit procedures with the Building Department.

Submit your application & design development drawings for Design Commission review. The Design Commission will review the project for compatibility.

The Design Commission may require modifications to the design for better compatibility with the existing neighborhood. Revisions to the design may be required as well as a re-review.

A Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued if the design meets the intent of the design guidelines.

Develop construction documents & submit the drawings for permit review to the Building Department.

For code requirements please refer to the Municipal Code which is available on line at [www.vah.com](http://www.vah.com). or for purchase through the Finance Counter.

# 10 references & resources

## architecture & construction references

Fundamentals of Building Construction  
Materials & Methods  
*Autor: Edward Allen*  
*Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.*

Building Construction Illustrated  
*Autor: Francis Ching*  
*Published by: Van Nostrand Reinhold*

The Distinctive Home: A Vision of Timeless Design  
*Autor: Jeremiah Eck*  
*Publisher: Taunton Press, Incorporated*

The Good Home  
*Autor: Dennis Wedlick & Philip Langdon*  
*Publisher: Harper Collins*

Workbook for Successful Redevelopment  
*Community First, Naperville*

Creating the Not So Big House  
*Autor: Sarah Susanka*  
*Publisher: The Taunton Press*

The New Bungalow  
Essays by Bialecki, Gladu, Kessenich,  
McCord, Bacon  
*Publisher: Gibbs Smith*

## landscape references

Landscaping Your Home  
*Autor: WM. R. Nelson Jr.*

The Garden Book  
*Autor: John Brookes*

Continuous Color  
*Autor: Pam Duthie*  
*Published by: Ball Publishing*

Chicago Botanic Garden  
1000 Lake Cook Road  
Glencoe IL 60022  
847 . 835 . 5440  
[www.chicago-botanic.org](http://www.chicago-botanic.org)

The Morton Arboretum  
4100 Illinois Route 53  
Lisle, IL 60532-1293  
630 . 968 . 0074  
[www.mortonarb.org](http://www.mortonarb.org)

University of Illinois Extension  
395 Algonquin Road  
Des Plaines, Illinois 60016  
847 . 818 . 2901  
[www.urbanext.uiuc.edu](http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu)

If you have any questions about the Design Guidelines or the Design Commission process, you may call the Department of Planning & Community Development at 847-368-5200.

# zoning definitions

The intent of this section is to provide some of the more commonly used zoning terminology as it refers to single family homes. This is not intended to be a complete summary of zoning terms, nor is it intended to replace the zoning ordinance. Wherever a discrepancy exists, the zoning ordinance will take precedence.

**Building Height.** The vertical distance measured from the sidewalk level or its equivalent established grade opposite the middle of the front of the building to the highest point of the roof in the case of a flat roof; to the deck line of a mansard roof; and to the mean height level between eaves and ridge of a gable, hip or gambrel roof; provided that where buildings are set back from the street line, the height of a building may be measured from the average elevation of the finished lot grade at the front of the building.

**Deck.** A raised platform over 16 inches above grade, open to the sky, which may or may not be directly attached to the principal building. If not directly attached to the principal building, it should be connected by stairs, walkway, or some other distinct means. The height of any deck shall not exceed the height of the first full story above grade.

**District or Zoning District.** A section or sections of the Village of Arlington Heights for which regulations governing the use of buildings and premises, the heights of buildings, the size of yards, and the intensity of use, are uniform.

**Dwelling, Detached.** A dwelling which is entirely surrounded by open space on the same lot designed exclusively for occupancy by one family.

**Floor Area.** (For determining floor area ratio). The floor area of a building is the sum of the gross horizontal areas of the several floors of the building measured from the exterior walls or from the centerline of walls separating two buildings.

The Floor Area of a building shall include basement floor area when more than one-half of the basement height is above the established curb level or above the finished lot grade level where curb level has not been established; elevator shafts and stairwells at each floor; floor space used for mechanical equipment, open or enclosed, located on the roof; penthouses; attic space having headroom of seven feet, ten inches or more; interior balconies and mezzanines; and enclosed porches, and floor area devoted to accessory uses. However, any space devoted to off-street parking or loading shall not be included in Floor Area.

**Floor Area Ratio (F.A.R.).** The floor area ratio of the building or buildings on any zoning lot is the total floor area of the building or buildings on that zoning lot divided by the area of such zoning lot, or in the case of planned unit developments, by the net site area. Measured from the exterior faces of the exterior walls or from the centerline of walls separating buildings.

**Garage.** A building or structure, or part thereof, used or intended for the parking and storage of vehicles.

**Impervious Surface Coverage:** Any hard-surfaced, man-made area that does not readily absorb or retain water, including but not limited to buildings, patios, paved parking and driveway areas, walkways, sidewalks and paved recreation areas (e.g. basketball court, tennis court, swimming pools). This would exclude public sidewalks on private property.

**Lot.** A designated parcel, tract or area of land established by plat, subdivision or as otherwise permitted by law, to be used, developed or built upon as a unit.

**Lot Area.** The net area of any lot shall be the area bounded by the lot lines, the right-of-way line of any street adjoining the lot, and the centerline of the right-of-way of any private access road adjoining the lot.

**Patio.** A level landscaped and/or surfaced area directly adjacent to a principal building not to exceed 16 inches above grade and open to the sky.

**Porch.** A covered protection from a wall of a building that may or may not use columns or other ground supports for structural purposes and which is primarily used to provide an extension of the living area.

**Principal Building.** A building in which the residence or permitted primary use of the lot is conducted. The principal building on the lot must be greater in area than the total of all other buildings on the premises.

**Yard, Exterior Side.** That part of the yard, on a corner lot, lying between the exterior side lot line and the nearest principal building and extending from the required front yard (or from the front lot line, if there is no required front yard) to the required rear yard. On a corner lot, the larger of the two dimensions adjacent to the street shall be considered the exterior side yard.

**Yard, Front.** A yard extending across the full width of the zoning lot and lying between the lot line which fronts on a street and the nearest line of the principal building. On a corner lot, the smaller of the two dimensions adjacent to a street shall be considered the front yard.

**Yard, Rear.** A yard extending across the full width of the zoning lot and lying between the rear line of the lot and the nearest line of the principal building.

**Yard, Side.** That part of the yard lying between the nearest line of the principal building and a side lot line, and extending from the required front yard (or from the front lot line, if there is no required front yard) to the required rear yard.