

SKY VALLEY ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Intent and Applicability

Diversity in architectural design is a part of the heritage of the established residences in Sky Valley. Although a building can be diverse in design, our goal is for any new buildings or renovations to be compatible with neighboring homes so that they share fundamental relationships of building mass and scale, finishes, design, orientation and setback.

1a. Intent.

It is our intent to make the construction process as easy as possible with no surprises for both the owner and the Board of Directors. It is also the intent to further ensure that new buildings and additions are compatible with the traditional rural character of Sky Valley, while also accommodating diversity in design. Creative designs are encouraged so long as they respect the basic informal character of the neighborhood and retain the “Mountain Woodsy” appearance of the existing surrounding environment.

It is the Sky Valley community’s intent to maintain the appearance and livability of Sky Valley, reinforce the distinct character of the neighborhood, maintain the value of our existing homes and promote lasting and sustained investment in the neighborhood with sound design.

1b. Applicability.

For the most part, these guidelines address building materials, finishes and colors, building setbacks, building size, additions, and accessory structures. They apply to all new structures and modifications and additions to existing structures.

2. Design Guidelines

2a. Building Materials, Finishes & Colors.

The use of traditional building materials that reflect those found in the surrounding neighborhood is encouraged. Newer materials may be appropriate, so long as they reflect the appearance and quality of the surrounding structures.

Building materials with texture and patterns create visual interest and signify quality construction and detailing. The use of natural materials such as painted or natural finish wood siding (horizontal lap, tongue and groove, board and batten or vertical) and stone are encouraged. Synthetic alternatives to these natural materials may be used if manufacturer specifications and/or precedents for application demonstrate that they will perform equally or better than the natural materials in terms of maintenance, design and aesthetic goals.

Colors for siding, roofing and exterior trim should conform with the typical “earth tone” colors found in Sky Valley. Acceptable colors are in the “earth tone” range, as well as muted blues, greens, or reds. A finish and color schedule submission will be required when applying for a Sky Valley Building Permit. The schedule should include a list of the affected areas and

related colors and should include color samples or swatches where possible. Any deviations from the recommended finishes or colors must be approved.

2b. Building Setbacks and Easements.

All Garrett County setbacks (minimums) are 40' from the front of the structure to the street. For a residence, the setback is also 40' to the rear property line and 15' on each side. For garages and other outbuildings, setbacks are 40' from the front and 5' on each side and rear. Encroachments into the required minimum setback such as decks, porches and protruding windows may be permitted, provided they don't interfere with the use of any easement. Encroachments require a variance either from the County or Sky Valley Manager depending on which type of easement or set back is involved. Shared access easements may allow driveways and common lanes to be located along private lot lines. Limits to access widths may be apportioned among all lots sharing access.

It is generally preferred that a new building setback be in line with the setback of adjacent buildings to maintain an appearance consistent with other front yards. Where there is a narrow range of variation in setbacks, a new building should fit within that established range.

2c. Building size and orientation.

A new building should be within the range of heights and scale seen traditionally in the neighborhood. A single-family structure should not overwhelm existing structures, in terms of height or overall size. Building height should not exceed a 20' wall plate or 35' to the top of the highest roof ridge.

All buildings should orient to the street or to common open spaces so as to serve as an extension of the streetscape and surrounding community.

2d. Additions.

Modifications or additions to buildings shall conform to these guidelines. The Sky Valley Manager may, if circumstances warrant, waive any requirement applied to an addition that conflicts with the consistent design of an existing building or conflicts with the prevailing character of Sky Valley. Additions should be designed such that the existing character of the building is maintained to the extent possible. They should be compatible with the scale and size of the primary building and should use materials that are similar to and compatible in appearance with the existing materials of the primary building.

To the extent possible, additions should be placed at the rear of the primary structure or set back from the front to minimize the visual impact on the original structure and to allow the original proportions and character to remain prominent. When constructing a rooftop addition, the mass and scale should be subordinate to the scale of the existing building. It should be set back from the front of the building and the form and slope should be in character with the existing building.

2e. Accessory Structures.

Using an accessory structure to accommodate parking and storage is encouraged, because doing so will help to reduce the perception of the overall mass of building on the site.

Garages should be limited in size to not be more than 40% of the elevation size of the front of

the house. Ground-mounted mechanical equipment servicing the building may be located in the side or rear setback provided that it extends no more than 6 feet from the principal building, no closer than 3 feet to the lot line, and is screened from public right-of-way by structures or landscape. These limitations do not apply to any utility structures otherwise authorized to be located according to easements or in the right-of-way, which shall follow the location and design standards of those specific authorizations.

Structural projections such as bay windows, balconies, canopies, chimneys, eaves, cornices, open fire escapes, egress wells, or other non-foundational overhangs or projections may extend up to 4 feet from the foundation and encroach into the setback, but no closer than 2 feet from any lot line. This exception shall be limited to no more than 20% of the surface area of a building elevation. The size and frontage of garages and other accessory structures should be kept to a minimum, particularly on narrower lots.

2f. Site Drainage.

All designs for new structures should have a SWM (Stormwater Management) Plan, which will be required by the County. The plan should preserve natural drainage and accommodate stormwater runoff into the roadside culverts along the street. If possible, the plan should include a natural drainage way as an amenity. It should avoid altering or obscuring natural or existing drainage ways, enhance existing detention areas and drainage ways, and include them as part of the landscape design to the extent possible. The use of open drainage swales with natural linings is encouraged, as is the use of native grasses and rock.

3. The Permit Process.

County Building Permits are required for most new construction, additions and renovations. Accessory buildings (like garages & sheds) that are larger than 240 square feet also need a building permit. Please call the Garrett County Permits Office for more details about permit requirements in specific situations including exemptions for special structures. Before starting a project, you must submit a Sky Valley Building Permit Application to the Sky Valley Manager. Please apply for the Garrett County permit first and include a copy of the approved Garrett County permit with the submission to Sky Valley.

It is advised to call the Garrett County permit office first and discuss your project with them. They will let you know what you will need to bring to the application meeting. Usually, it's just a sketch of the project with full dimensions, which can be hand-drawn. Anything larger than a garage or porch will require architectural or builders' drawings. Most likely they will send you to the Dept of Health building on Memorial Drive to get a sign-off that the project does not impede your septic system or field.

Garrett County Permits and Inspection Division: 301-334-7470, Courthouse Administrative Building 203 South Fourth Street-Room, 208 Oakland, MD 21550, Bruce Metz, Chad Fike.

A printable copy of the SV Permit is located in the Members Area of the SV website.

Per the SV By-Laws, the exterior elements of all projects must be completed within 12 months of construction start. That would include roof, siding, soffits, windows, doors, decking, driveway and landscaping. Please refer to the Deed/Covenants and Sky Valley By-Laws for further guidance.