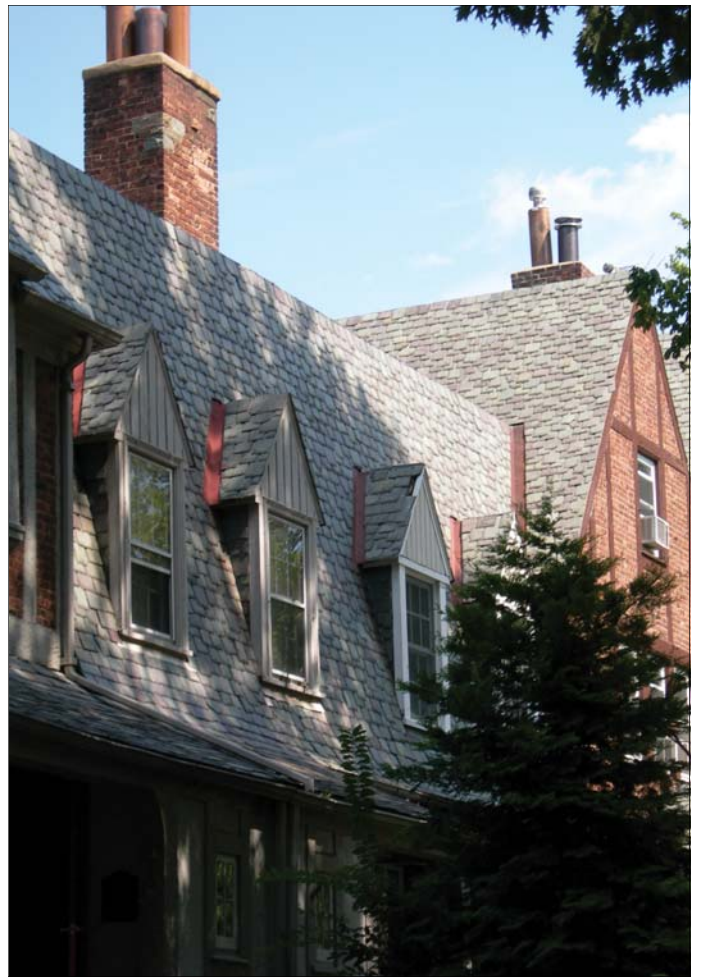




# FOXHALL VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES



D.C. HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD



## INTRODUCTION

The Foxhall Village Historic District was designated in July 2007 to acknowledge and preserve the special architectural and landscape character of this early 20<sup>th</sup> century planned neighborhood. Because Foxhall Village is a designated historic district, exterior alterations are subject to a design review process under the District's preservation law. The Historic Preservation Review Board and the staff at the Historic Preservation Office review building permit applications to ensure that such work preserves important character-defining features of historic properties and that alterations are



compatible with the district's existing character. These design guidelines have been developed to assist property owners in understanding the principles and practices of preservation and

compatible alterations in the Foxhall Village Historic District. These guidelines supplement the policies established in the city's preservation law, regulations, and current practices.

The Historic Preservation Office (HPO), which has a professional staff of architects and preservation specialists, can provide architectural and technical assistance on appropriate products, services, and techniques relevant to the renovation of older homes.

Property owners are encouraged to consult informally before submitting an application for exterior work, either by phone, email, or in person.

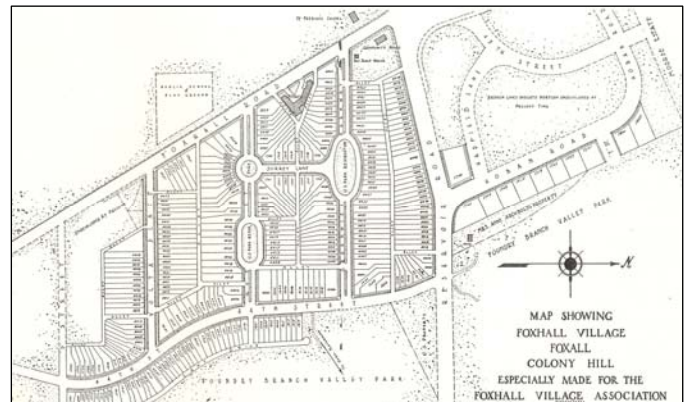
Most types of work, such as in-kind repair and replacement and minor rear alterations, can be approved by the HPO staff in an expedited

“over-the-counter” permit review. More substantial work, such as new construction or additions, is subject to review by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) at one of its monthly meetings.

For further information and full texts of the preservation law and regulations, see the HPO website at [www.planning.dc.gov/hpo](http://www.planning.dc.gov/hpo).

## THE FOXHALL VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Foxhall Village Historic District is significant as a cohesive collection of residential properties designed and developed to evoke the image of a traditional English village. The community is comprised primarily of rowhouses with generous setbacks, enhanced by lush gardens and planted terraces. The houses are laid out in a picturesque manner along winding lanes, circles, and crescent-shaped open spaces with rear alleys.



*A 1932 map of Foxhall Village shows the irregular sized lots and traffic circles of the district.*

The neighborhood was built principally between 1925 and 1933 by two development teams, Boss and Phelps, Inc. and Waverly Taylor, Inc. The buildings, designed in variations of the Tudor Revival style, are finished in brick, stucco and half-timbering, capped by slate roofs with side or front gables, and detailed with decorative clay chimney pots,

multi-pane windows, and distinctive wood front doors.

The district also contains a handful of freestanding houses including two prefabricated mail-order houses from Sears, Roebuck, and Company. In addition, many of the houses in Foxhall Village have rear garages facing alleys, which are important to the original design of the community. The one commercial building, located on Foxhall Road, was designed in the Tudor Revival style to complement the neighborhood's residential architecture.

The design of Foxhall Village illustrates how equal attention was paid to both the architecture and the landscape planning of the neighborhood. The street plan conforms to the natural topography of the land and includes such features as landscaped traffic circles and medians, creating picturesque views throughout the neighborhood. Enhanced today by mature plantings, Foxhall Village conveys an informal, park-like setting.



Surrey Lane and Greenwich Parkway photographed around 1929.

*A 1929 view of Foxhall Village shows how the street pattern and siting of the houses conforms to the topography of the land.*

## DESIGN REVIEW PRINCIPLES

The Foxhall Village Historic District Design Guidelines are based on the following three principles:

1. The Foxhall Village Historic District is comprised almost entirely of Tudor-Revival rowhouses that have retained their significant architectural features – brick, wood, stucco and half-timbered siding; distinctive wood front doors; leaded glass and multi-light wood windows; varied roof forms with gables and dormers clad in slate; and chimney pots, decorative brickwork, bas-relief panels, and other unique details. These character-defining elements should be preserved and repaired, or replaced in-kind, if necessary.
2. The landscape of the Foxhall Village Historic District helps create the special character of the district. Significant landscape features include the naturalistic topography, open unfenced front yards with low brick retaining walls, simple concrete steps, and minimal paving in the front yards, all of which contribute to the park-like feel of the neighborhood. These elements and characteristics should be retained and preserved.
3. The significant architectural character of Foxhall Village is conveyed through the primary, street-fronting elevations. These front elevations remain remarkably intact, retaining their original appearance. Rear elevations are generally more utilitarian in design and often exhibit later additions and alterations. While all exterior alterations are subject to preservation review, as a general rule, greater scrutiny is given to alterations that affect a building's primary elevation or are visible from a street. More flexibility is possible for changes that affect only a rear or secondary elevation and are not visible from a street.

## ALTERATIONS GUIDELINES

### **WINDOWS**

The design, materials, and variety of window types are important to the architectural character of the Foxhall Village Historic District. The mixture of multi-pane double-hung windows, casement windows, and leaded glass windows on primary elevations contribute to the neighborhood's appealing Tudor Revival character. Repair and restoration of original windows is strongly encouraged and should be investigated prior to consideration of replacement. In many cases restoring original windows to good operable condition and/or installing storm windows can achieve similar energy efficiency to modern replacements – typically at a fraction of the cost.



*The first option for historic windows should be repair rather than replacement.*

If original windows are significantly deteriorated and must be replaced, new windows on primary elevations should accurately replicate the pane configuration, operation, material, profiles and appearance of the original sash and frames, including sash depth and spacing between ganged windows. If the original windows have already been replaced, the appearance of replacement

windows should replicate the original configurations, using historic photographs or similar houses in the historic district as a guide.

Original leaded glass windows should not be replaced. Where leaded glass windows were replaced prior to designation, a substitute material that recalls the configuration of the historic window may be used as a replacement. On rear or other secondary elevations not visible from a street, replacement windows do not have to match the original windows in terms of configuration or material.

Because the primary elevations of buildings in Foxhall Village are carefully composed and typically relate to a rhythm and pattern of fenestration that extends throughout a row, altering the size of existing window openings or creating new windows on primary elevations is almost never appropriate. New window openings on secondary elevations may be possible if they are consistent with the style of the building and its pattern of fenestration, and do not result in the alteration of any important architectural features.



*The replacement of historic windows with new windows that fail to match the details, configuration, and finish of the originals results in the loss of a significant architectural feature.*

## **BASEMENT WINDOWS**

While in most cases expanding a front basement window is not appropriate, there may be limited cases where a ground level basement window can be lengthened where the expansion is hidden from the street due to grade, depth of the front yard, or other site conditions. As a general rule, any acceptable expansion must be downward only (maintaining the original width).

## **DOORS**

Front doors are an important character-defining feature in Foxhall Village that should be preserved. The original doors are wood, often with distinctive shapes, hardware, and paneling, and should be retained and repaired. If an original front door is beyond repair, the



replacement must match the material, shape, and details of the original door. If the original front door is no longer in place, the

replacement door should be of the style and appearance that is found on similar houses that do retain their original doors. On rear or other secondary elevations not visible from a street, replacement doors do not have to match original doors in terms of configuration or material.

It is possible to add storm doors, but they should be installed within the existing door frame and be largely glazed to allow the original front door to remain visible.

## **WALL MATERIALS**

The buildings in Foxhall Village have a rich variety of wall materials, including brick, wood siding, and stucco with half-timbering. Original wall materials should be retained and repaired to the fullest extent possible.

If brick repair is necessary, any new bricks should match the existing in color and dimension. Where repointing mortar joints

between bricks is necessary, the mortar must match the chemical composition of the existing in order to properly function. In



addition, it must match the existing color and joint width. Similarly, stucco must match the existing in composition and color. True stucco is required and must have a surface finish that replicates the original.

If wood siding on a primary elevation is beyond repair, it must be replaced with wood that matches the existing board dimensions. On secondary elevations not visible from a street, wood should be replaced in-kind or with materials such as fiber-cement siding, which closely replicates the appearance and profile of wood. Metal and vinyl siding may not be used on primary elevations and its use is discouraged on secondary elevations.

## **PAINTING**

Painting trim, half-timbering, and stucco does not require a permit and is considered good home maintenance. The HPO recommends a color palette that blends with the existing character of the neighborhood. Painting exterior bricks, concrete, or stone is not permitted.

## **ROOFS**

The original roofing material throughout the Foxhall Village Historic District is slate. The Boss and Phelps houses used Bangor slate from Pennsylvania while Waverly Taylor homes used variegated slate.

If visible from a street, replacement roofing should match the style and material of the original slate roof. Even if the existing material is not original, any replacement roof material should match the historic slate in terms of color, texture, size and finish. Roofing not visible from a street, typically on rear

elevations or rear additions, can be replaced either in-kind or with an alternative material.



*The slate roofs of houses in Foxhall Village were laid in subtle patterns that should be replicated in any replacements.*

## **DETAILS**

Many of the facades throughout Foxhall Village have unique architectural details such as decorative lintels, bas-relief panels, decorative stonework, medallions, etc. All of these details are important to preserve and should either be repaired or replaced by replicas if beyond repair. Additionally, the decorative chimney pots found on Boss and Phelps houses should be maintained or, if beyond repair, replaced with appropriate decorative clay replacements

## **ADDITIONS GUIDELINES**

While additions are a common means of adapting older buildings for modern use, they should be designed in a way that is compatible with the character of the original building and its context in terms of placement, height, form, and overall appearance.

Adding to the rear of a building is generally the best way to create extra space without impacting the property's architectural character or having a significant impact on the

surrounding district. Ideally, a rear addition should not be visible from the street. A rear addition should be subordinate – generally lower in height and smaller in footprint – than the building to which it is being added, and should not alter the primary form of the original roof.

Adding to the front of a building in Foxhall Village historic building is rarely – if ever – appropriate, as it would cover the significant architectural features of the primary elevation, significantly alter the appearance of the building, and change its relationship with neighboring properties. Enclosing front porches, adding projecting bays on houses that do not already have or historically did not have them, excavating for the creation of basement entrances where the grade is flat, or adding garage entrances are all incompatible alterations on primary elevations.



*These rear additions, decks and porches are compatible in size and placement, and have no impact on the architectural character of the neighborhood.*



## ROOFTOP ADDITIONS

The distinctive roof lines formed by gables and dormers are important characteristics of houses in Foxhall Village that should be protected from inappropriate alterations that interrupt or compete with these profiles.

Rooftop additions are rarely appropriate, but may be approved where they are not visible from a street, do not significantly alter the massing of the house, and do not result in the alteration or loss of significant architectural features. Similarly, roof decks and their access stairs should not be visible from the street. If visible from the rear, additions and decks should be set back from the rear wall to minimize their appearance.

The addition of a dormer on a front elevation is rarely if ever appropriate as it will alter the established rhythm of the rooflines and dormers in Foxhall Village. In the rare case that a dormer is appropriate, it should match an existing dormer in terms of shape, details, material and location. If no dormer exists, it should be set back from the edges of the roof an appropriate distance and match the existing roofing material.



*Additions that are visible from the street, such as dormers (left) or that overwhelm the original house (right) alter the distinctive character of Foxhall Village.*

## OUTBUILDINGS

Garages were integral to the original construction of Foxhall Village and are considered contributing elements of the historic district. They should be retained if possible, particularly on the ends of alleys, where they are visible from the street.

If a new garage is planned, it should be clearly subordinate in size to the house and should reflect other alley buildings in terms of height, massing, or materials.



*The rear yards in Foxhall Village contain both garages and parking pads accessed off of the alleys.*

## MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT

No permit is required for heating or air conditioning units installed in an existing window opening where the installation requires simply raising the sash or opening a casement window. Removal of window sash is allowed provided the installation does not result in the removal of the window frame and the window is restored to its original condition in the event the equipment is removed.

Through-wall installation of equipment is not permitted on primary elevations, but may be permissible on secondary elevations as long as the installation does not damage significant architectural features and is finished in a manner that generally blends in with the surrounding material.

Large mechanical equipment must be installed where it is not visible from the street, such as in rear yards or significantly set back on rooftops.

If possible, new electrical meters should be installed inside or placed where they are least obtrusive to the historic district.

Satellite dishes and antennae should be installed set far back on a roof or on a rear elevation so that they are not visible from a street.

### **SOLAR PANELS/PHOTOVOLTAIC SHINGLES**

Like mechanical equipment, solar panels or photovoltaic shingles should be installed where they are not visible from a street. The installation of photovoltaic shingles on primary elevations is an incompatible alteration that would alter the appearance of the slate roofs that are a significant architectural feature of Foxhall Village.



*Any installation on a roof should not result in the loss or alteration to distinctive architectural features such as shingles, chimney pots, or other decorative details.*

### **LANDSCAPE FEATURES**

The landscape within Foxhall Village is an integral aspect of the neighborhood's aesthetic that was designed to reinforce the picturesque English village character.

The medians, parkways, and the front yards of the rowhouses form a continuous, park-like landscape. Houses generally sit atop naturalistically landscaped berms, often supported by brick retaining walls, without sharp divisions such as fences and walls between properties. The special characteristics

of this landscape should be protected and preserved.



Modifications to existing walls, walks, paving, driveways or fences, and construction of new driveways, sidewalks, masonry walls, steps or garden pavilions require a building permit and are subject to review to ensure compatibility with the character of the Foxhall Village Historic District. Planting and plant selection do not require a permit and are not subject to review.

### **FENCES**

The front yards of Foxhall Village are characterized by their open nature which allows the yards to flow as a continuous open space. With the exception of the district's detached houses, new fencing in front yards is generally not appropriate. Rear yard fences should be no higher than seven feet. Chain link and vinyl fences are generally not appropriate for rear yard fences.

For detached houses, front yard fences (and side yard fences for corner properties) should



be no higher than 42” and have a 50% solid to void ratio and have a historic appearance compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

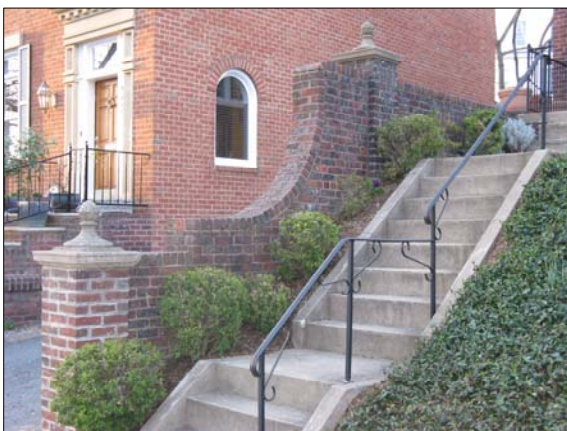


*Fences in side yards can have a negative visual impact and alter the open nature of the yards that is characteristic of Foxhall Village.*

## PAVING

Front steps and walkways were originally concrete. Where repair or replacement is necessary, they should be constructed of materials that match the historic paving materials. Paving in front yards should be kept to a minimum so as to retain the lush, park-like feel of the district. New patios are generally not appropriate in front or visible side yards, but may be located in rear yards.

Handrails along front steps should be simple and match the design and materials of other historic examples in the district.



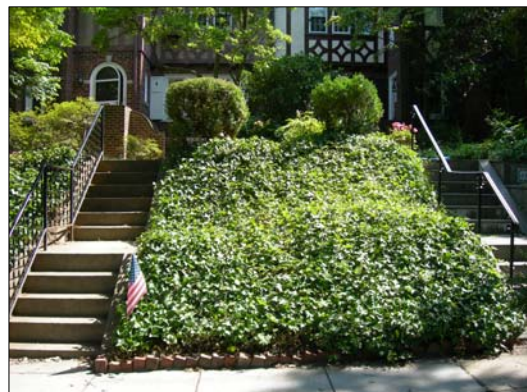
## RETAINING WALLS

One of the unifying landscape characteristics in Foxhall Village is its continuous brick retaining walls which separate the raised front yards from the public sidewalk. The walls feature brick piers at corners and at significant changes in height. On the houses designed by Boss and Phelps, many piers were capped with decorative concrete caps, which should be retained or, if necessary, replaced to match.

Reconstructed or new retaining walls should match these historic retaining walls in height, material, craftsmanship and overall appearance. In order to retain the neighborhood’s naturalistic topography, terracing sloping front yards with multiple retaining walls should be avoided. Similarly, to retain the open, park-like feel of the district, free-standing walls in front yards between properties should also be avoided.



*Adding terraces to front yards (above) results in the loss of the historic topography and introduces retaining walls that damage the historic open character of the district (below).*



## **OBTAINING PERMITS**

Virtually all types of work in the District of Columbia require a building permit. Permits ensure compliance with construction, zoning, fire, and other applicable codes to protect the safety and well-being of District residents.

The Historic Preservation Office reviews all permit applications for work in historic districts to ensure compatibility with the site and surrounding neighborhood.

Permits are required for window, door, and roof replacements; work on front steps or walks; retaining wall construction or repair; repointing brick masonry; installing or replacing fences; additions, new construction, etc. The following work does not require a permit:

- Simple repair and maintenance
- Exterior painting of wood trim (not masonry)

- Window and door appurtenances, including screens, storm windows, security bars, and removable air conditioning units
- Landscaping, including planting, pruning, or removal of trees and shrubs
- Non-permanent site features, including outdoor furniture, play equipment, and garden sculpture or ornaments on private property.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

District of Columbia Office of Planning  
Historic Preservation Office  
1100 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Suite E650  
Washington DC 20024  
(202) 442-8800  
[www.planning.dc.gov/hpo](http://www.planning.dc.gov/hpo)

Foxhall Community Citizens  
Association  
[www.foxhall.org](http://www.foxhall.org)

