



**Village of River Hills**  
7650 N. Pheasant Lane  
River Hills, Wisconsin 53217

Administration: 352-8213  
Police: 352-8211  
Public Works: 352-0080  
Administration Fax: 247-2308  
Police Fax: 352-8355

## **VILLAGE OF RIVER HILLS CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES**

The founders of the Village of River Hills wisely laid out the area to insure that it would retain its natural character and rural simplicity and to preserve the traditional use of the home sites that have been platted. In more recent years, so that the long established conventional appearance of the village in accordance with its original concept would be insured, the Village Board of Trustees established a Building Board charged with the responsibility of reviewing the plans of all proposed new homes, additions, and exterior alterations including fences, berms, exterior lighting, and major landscaping.

The purpose of these guidelines is to assure that any building or site development is compatible with the established character of the Village. It is a primary Village goal to enhance the natural beauty of the area, to retain the quality of life and to preserve the privacy of residents.

Although there are specific ordinances which Village committees are responsible for administering, they cannot address all issues. These guidelines are meant to supplement existing ordinances and provide direction to owners, architects, builders and landscapers to assure that projects complement the environment and to help in guiding an applicant through the approval process in a timely and efficient manner.

The Building Board encourages individuality of expression in the use of design and the appearance of homes that are to be built as long as they conform to the traditional character of the village. The Board encourages the use of modern materials and ideas, but believes that the construction of extreme or other unusual style buildings does not make the best use of the natural beauty of the area and is not in keeping with the original concept of the village.

Plans and renderings you submit by the first Monday of the month will be reviewed promptly at the next regular meeting of the Board. Following are excerpts from the Building Board ordinance and a copy of the Building Permit Requirements for your information and convenience.

We look forward to working with you on your project.

**River Hills Building Board**

## BUILDING PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

### APPLICATION AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS:

An application for a building permit is required for any new structure or alteration to a structure (see Village Code 30.49 and item 19 below for definition of a Structure) and must be completed and accompanied by each of the items identified in sections 1 through 4 below by the end of business on the first Monday of the month to be considered at that month's Building Board Meeting.

1. PLANS (2 copies) must contain, in 1/4" scale:
  - a. All elevations
  - b. All floor plans
  - c. Colored rendering of the front elevation for new buildings, additions with square footage greater than 500 square feet, or smaller additions which deviate from the architectural style of the current structure.
  - d. Complete construction details, interior and exterior
  - e. Chimney details
  - f. Detail on all exterior lighting fixtures including manufacturer cutsheets
  - g. Manufacturer brochures on windows
  - h. Complete construction details of all utility buildings
  - i. Two copies of the drainage plan for all new buildings and additions
  - j. One copy of the erosion control plan for all new buildings and additions
  - k. Two copies of the energy calculations for all new residences
  - l. Other data pertinent to the review the Building Board may reasonably request.
  
2. PLAT SURVEY (2 copies for new buildings, fences, berms, or additions with a change in the building footprint.)

The survey must contain the following data of existing condition:

  - a. Dimensions of lot and elevations
  - b. Location and dimensions of house, garage, drives, and all utility buildings
  - c. Front, rear and side setbacks of house and all utility buildings
  - d. Proposed grade of house
  - e. Entrance drive to house and garage
  
3. PHOTOGRAPHS

4x6 or larger photographs must be submitted for any exterior modifications to an existing structure, including the primary elevation of the structure, all sides adjacent to the modifications, and neighboring structures on the property.
  
4. LANDSCAPING PLANS

Two copies of a landscaping plan must be submitted with the Building Permit Application for new buildings and additions that will add more than 500sq ft to the existing footprint. The plans should contain the species, size, and location of trees and shrubs, the location and height of berms and the groundcover materials, detail on all exterior lighting including cutsheets, and driveways, pillars and walkways. The plan should be in harmony with the development and physical characteristics of the surrounding lands.

## **AESTHETIC GUIDELINES:**

### 5. DESIGN

A primary concern of the Village is that new or remodeled structures are of a well thought out design and are well detailed. A high degree of architectural integrity is viewed as very important. Roofs that are flat or too low a pitch, window styles that are not consistent throughout the structure and materials that are not consistent throughout the structure are of primary concern, especially when they don't fit the architectural style of the existing structures.

### 6. MATERIALS

The materials of the roofing and exterior surfaces, amount, style and size of windows, colors and finishes should be clearly thought out and identified before construction. Materials should be consistent around the full structure, and environmentally appropriate; natural materials are recommended. Preferred roofing includes cedar, slate, concrete, and dimensional shingle when appropriate for the architectural style. The use of wood, timbers, fieldstone and brick is encouraged. The Board strongly discourages vinyl and aluminum siding, and any materials that would clash with the aesthetic architecture in the neighborhood. Exterior chimneys should be stone or brick. Samples of all materials and colors should be shared as part of the approval process. Any change in plans, design or materials after approval shall be resubmitted to the Building Board.

### 7. MASSING

A well-designed structure should take into consideration the size of the property and nearby houses. To prevent over-building of a parcel, for lots of 5 acres or larger, the total footprint of all buildings should be less than 4% of the lot size. For properties of 2 acres and 1 acre, the footprint should be not greater than 7% and 8% of the lot sizes respectively. The structure should be well-proportioned with a maximum height of 26 feet to the eaves line and 40 feet to the ridge line of the roof, parapet or top of chimney as measured from the first floor line which shall not be located greater than two (2) feet above the average finished grade of the front wall of the structure. Where sloping land permits the basement level to be on-grade, the appearance of this elevation should not negatively impact neighboring homes. The main entrance grade should relate well to the natural terrain, avoiding a significant buildup of earth to raise the structure. However, it is conceivable that a proposed structure will conform to the massing limitations of the building code yet be objectionable from an aesthetic standpoint. The Building Board will evaluate the proposed structure's size, placement, proportion, landscaping, and orientation in relation to neighboring structures and the lot's natural features.

### 8. REFLECTIVE SURFACES

Skylights, greenhouses, vents and flashings that may cause sunlight to reflect onto neighbor's homes are to be discouraged. As an alternative to skylights, architecturally suitable dormers are encouraged. When skylights must be used, it is suggested that the quantity be limited, they be placed on the rear elevation, and the size and location be consistent with good architectural design. When greenhouses are part of the design, it is suggested that they be located at the rear of the structure and be kept to a reasonably small size. It is recommended that roof and plumbing vents, flashing, gutters and rain conductors be of a non-shiny surface. They should blend in with the color of the roof or wall treatment and should be of copper, lead coated copper or painted a flat color to match. The use of bright aluminum or other highly reflective materials is discouraged.

9. LANDSCAPING

Village ordinances require a plan showing the species, size, and location of trees, shrubs and ground cover plants, and the location, height, and side slope of berms over four feet in height, although it is preferred that all berms be shown. The plan must include size and location of patios, fencing, exterior lighting, and driveway pillars and gates. Per Village ordinances, a landscaping plan shall be submitted with the building plans, and must be completed within one growing season after receiving a certificate of occupancy. The overall planning concept shall include landscaping that is in harmony with the surroundings with the use of natural landscaping encouraged. Tennis and other courts as well as swimming pools and other recreational facilities should be screened from neighbors and approved by the Building Board.

10. DRIVES

Except for ingress and egress drives and garage aprons, it is recommended that pavement shall not be placed between the lot line and the set-back line. This includes circle drives in front of structures as well as parking areas which are not part of ingress or egress drives.

11. ALTERATION OF THE SITE

To ensure privacy, it is encouraged that no vegetation of good quality be removed from the area between the lot line and the set-back line. Anywhere on the site (where removal is necessary) the landscape plan should show the trees, bushes and indigenous plantings to be removed and how the area will be restored to its previous character. The use of indigenous plantings is encouraged and the natural grade of the area should be preserved whenever possible.

12. BERMS

Berms which exceed 4 feet in height from the natural terrain, including less than 4 foot additions to current berms, require approval from both the Village Engineer and the Building Board. Berms of any height are to be shown on landscape plans when submitted with the building plans. For the purpose of these guidelines, berms are considered to be masses of land exceeding a slope of 1:3. The use of berms to shield noise, views and headlights has become a popular landscape feature. The design of berms shall be in good taste and of generally accepted good design. Berm height and width should vary to form an irregular, more natural barrier. Randomly placed plantings, heights and slopes are preferable over a rigid, straight berm with trees and shrubs planted on the ridge line. Slopes shall not exceed a ratio of 1:2 when possible; keeping in mind that it is difficult to maintain shrubbery on slopes steeper than this, and difficult to mow on slopes steeper than 1:3. For example, using a 1:2 ratio, a berm of 8 feet in height would require a width of 32 feet at its base, which dimension should be taken into account when planning building and pavement locations.

### 13. EXTERIOR LIGHTING

It is the intent of the Building Board to minimize exterior lighting in order to retain the rural character of the Village. Lighting, which includes landscaping, safety, post top, parking, court, pool, feature and building mounted should be designed in good taste and be shown on plans. The use of cut-off lenses, low watt sized bulbs, motion, and time restricted lights is encouraged. Designs should focus on controlled light spillage relevant to the intended purpose. Metal halide or incandescent colors are preferred over mercury or sodium vapor colors. It is encouraged that post top driveway lights shall be of a decorative wattage as opposed to street light intensity, and pool, court and parking lights be mounted at a height of less than 20 feet with controlled spillage. Section 30.55 of the Village Ordinances states: "All outdoor lighting within the Village of River Hills shall be so located and shielded so that no excessive glare or illumination is cast upon property of others." It is recommended that tree lighting from either the ground or from within the tree should be limited to less than 50 incandescent watts. It is also recommended that lighting of buildings be allowed only from casual spill over light from tree lighting and from exterior post lights and not from ground lights.

### 14. FENCING

Applications for fence permits should clearly identify the style, height, location, materials and color. The supporting components or bracing side of the fence should be placed to the inside of the lot. Bright metallic colors are not harmonious with the existing architecture and fencing in the Village and selections of natural materials and dark colors are suggested. Fencing that encompasses a large portion of a lot or that appears from the street or to neighbors as a visual wall is not believed to be in harmony with the rural nature of the village and will be considered only in conjunction with extensive landscaping. Residents are encouraged to consider landscaping alone as a better solution than fences to many issues.

### 15. OUT-STRUCTURES

The building board encourages all outbuildings to be designed in a manner consistent with the architecture of the primary dwelling and other structures on the property. The location of tool sheds, transformers, air conditioning units, emergency generators, satellite dishes greater than 3 feet in diameter, and waste bins should be shown in building plans and should be screened from view when possible through the use of shrubbery, fences or berms. Overhead cable and electric laterals are discouraged. Noise generating equipment should be muffled with the level of noise acceptable to the Building Inspector.

## **PROCESS AND DEFINITIONS:**

### 16. BUILDING BOARD MEETINGS

The Building Board meets on the third Monday of each month at 5:00 P.M. at the Village Hall, and will only review fully documented building permit applications received in the village hall prior to the close of business on the first Monday of the month. Attendance by the applicant, contractor, or designate who can explain the purpose and goals of the request answer any questions is required for approval.

### 17. BUILDING BOARD APPROVAL

No building permit for any building or structure for which a permit is required may be issued until approved by the Building Board. All permits for alterations or additions to existing buildings and accessory structures becomes void unless operations are commenced within four (4) months from the date the permit is issued or if work authorized by such permit is suspended at any time after work is commenced, for a period of more than sixty (60) days. The permit for new dwellings shall expire twenty-four months after issuance if the dwelling exterior has not been completed.

18. ALTERATIONS OF PLANS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Plans approved by the Building Board and for which a building permit has been issued may not be altered in any manner during construction including style, decoration, color, materials or landscaping unless such alterations have been approved by the Building Board.

19. DEFINITION OF STRUCTURE

Anything framed, constructed or assembled out of component parts and which is erected or relocated so as to be fastened to or rest on a permanent foundation or the ground, or which constitutes a structural alteration or addition to an existing structure, for any occupancy or use whatsoever, including permanent fences, and excluding removable signs showing names and/or street numbers, and mailboxes.

20. BUILDING SET-BACKS

For 5 acre parcels or larger, a minimum 100 foot set-back from the front lot line and 75 feet from the side and rear lot lines is required. In addition, it is recommended that no primary structure be built within 150 feet from a neighbor's primary structure. For 2 acre parcels the minimum set-back from all lot lines shall be 50 feet and for 1 acre parcels the minimum is 30 feet. Front yard set-backs for 1 and 2 acre lots are subject to a formula: upon lots of less than 300 feet in depth, the required set-back may be reduced 1 foot for each 3 feet that the lot is less than 300 feet in depth.

If there was a residence or principal building on a property before May 1, 1995 that was built under previous set-back requirements and is already closer to the lot line than current set-backs, previous setbacks would still apply to the original structure on those parcels: 100' from the center of the road, 20' from side and rear lot lines. While the ordinance allows this grandfathering, 20' from the lot lines is generally considered too close and every effort should be made to maximize the distance between structures.

21. WETLANDS

Contact the Village prior to planning a project to determine the extent of wetlands and floodplains. State and local ordinances will apply.

22. CLEAN-UP

Section 7.155 (2) (a) (1) of the Village Ordinances states: "Prior to the certificate of Occupancy being issued, the owner of the property shall be responsible to remove all building materials and debris from the premises, and all finish grading shall be completed."

23. MAINTENANCE

Properly maintained structures and grounds are required in the Village. Complaints of poor maintenance or accumulation of yard refuse should be made, in writing, to the Village Manager for appropriate follow-up.

24. OCCUPANCY PERMIT

A final inspection must be made and all work approved prior to issuance of an occupancy permit.

25. ADDITIONAL PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS

It is the owner's responsibility to assure that the proper permits are taken out for culvert, heating and air conditioning, electrical and plumbing work. The building inspector should be notified for inspections at least 48 hours in advance. The required inspections are footing, foundation, rough carpentry, insulation, basement drain tile, and final. The final inspection must be made and all work approved prior to occupancy. Additional inspections by the appropriate inspector are required for heating/air conditioning, electrical, and plumbing work.

**VILLAGE OF RIVER HILLS**  
**MATERIALS AND FORMS NEEDED FOR BUILDING PERMIT**

- TWO (2) SETS OF PLANS IN ¼ SCALE (Include floor plans and all exterior elevations with lighting detail for new residences, additions, fences or other buildings)
  
- TWO (2) PLAT PLANS OR SURVEYS FOR NEW BUILDINGS, FENCES, BERMS, OR ADDITIONS WITH A CHANGE IN FOOTPRINT. (Indicate where all improvements are located, including distance to all lot lines)
  
- A COLORED RENDERING OF THE PRIMARY ELEVATION OF THE PROJECT TO ¼" SCALE FOR NEW BUILDINGS, ADDITIONS GREATER THAN 500 SQUARE FEET, OR SMALLER ADDITIONS THAT WILL INCLUDE A CHANGE IN THE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE OF THE STRUCTURE.
  
- 4X6 OR LARGER PHOTOGRAPHS FOR ANY EXTERIOR MODIFICATION TO AN EXISTING STRUCTURE, INCLUDING THE PRIMARY ELEVATION OF THE STRUCTURE, ALL SIDES ADJACENT TO THE MODIFICATION, AND NEIGHBORING STRUCTURES ON THE PROPERTY.
  
- MATERIAL SAMPLES (Brick, Stone, Siding, Roofing, Fencing, Gutters/Flashing and Paint colors are required in any case where there is a change from the materials in an existing structure. Manufacture brochures should be provided for windows and exterior lighting fixtures.)
  
- TWO (2) SETS OF LANDSCAPING PLANS FOR NEW BUILDINGS AND ADDITIONS THAT WILL ADD MORE THAN 30% TO THE EXISTING FOOTPRINT. (Show type and location of trees, shrubs, berms, groundcover material, exterior lighting, fencing, patio areas, driveway pillars and walkways. Separate plans and permit are required for a hill, mound, or berm over 4' in height.)
  
- A DRAINAGE PLAN FOR ALL NEW BUILDINGS AND ADDITIONS. THE PLANS SHOULD SHOW THAT PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS DO NOT BLOCK EXISTING DRAINAGE FROM THE UPSTREAM PROPERTIES NOR CREATE FLOODING AT DOWNSTREAM PROPERTIES OR DRAINAGE FACILITIES AND COMPLIANCE WITH STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE.
  
- ONE EROSION CONTROL PLAN FOR ALL NEW BUILDINGS AND ADDITIONS (Silt fencing can be noted of survey.)
  
- TWO ENERGY CALCULATIONS (New residence only)

WISCONSIN STATE APPLICATION (New residence only)  
**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Elaine Schieble at 414-352-8213**

**Note: The Building Board reserves the right to request additional information.**