

Expert Advice

Review board's approval a necessity

Question: I'm planning to make improvements to the exterior of my house. Do I have to notify my homeowners association before doing so?

Answer: Yes. Virtually all communities with a homeowners association have an architectural review board, which is a special committee established by the association's board of directors. The purpose of the

architectural review board is to approve or disapprove of exterior improvements to your home and property. The review board is granted that authority through the association's "declarations, covenants and restrictions" that were established for your community. The goal is to maintain the aesthetics consistent with the other homes in your community.

Common mistakes made by homeowners includes failing to seek approval for exterior projects, such as

landscaping, painting and additions. Even the seemingly smallest job — say, planting a new tree — can trigger the need to seek approval from your architectural review board.

If a homeowner disregards this procedure or a negative decision by the board, he or she can be penalized in a variety of ways, including (among other things) having the work undone and later being charged for it. Therefore, don't underestimate your association's authority or shirk your responsibility to make the necessary application prior to beginning your exterior project.



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