

Fence Guidelines - Hellgate Meadows

The design guidelines for fences within Hellgate Meadows are in the "Architectural Standards" document, which is among the documents that all homeowners are supposed to get from their Builders and pass along to successive owners. It is also available on our Website (<http://www.hmrna.org/>). Because the language relating to fences is scattered throughout the document, here's a paraphrase of what it says:

Fences may be constructed of brick, stone masonry, wood or synthetic wood (this means it looks like painted wood) pickets/lattice/boards, painted or coated welded steel or iron, or in some instances other materials to match the adjoining home. Chain link or other modern woven wire material is not allowed, sorry. Shiny white vinyl is also not allowed, although vinyl fencing that more nearly resembles wood may be allowed. Cement block is unlikely to be approved because the material would not be compatible with any of the current homes in the neighborhood. There may be circumstances where cement block would be approved for some portions of a home and thus might be OK for some portion of an adjacent fence, but so far it hasn't happened. The style of the fence must be generally compatible with the adjoining house materials and configured in predominantly vertical elements, with a few exceptions.

No privacy fences may extend any further toward the front of the property than the house does. Side and back yard privacy fencing may be up to 6 feet in height. Of course, fences must also meet requirements of the City of Missoula, and City permits (<http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/581/Fence-Permit-Information>) must be obtained if the fence is close enough to a street or alley that the City requires a permit.

The Minor Change Application form (available at http://www.hmrna.org/uploads/2/7/3/8/2738578/forme_minorchangeapplication.doc) must be filled out and sent to the architectural review committee, and the committee must have time to review it and forward a recommendation to the board on approval BEFORE any work begins.

There are a few fences in the neighborhood that don't conform to these requirements. These fences were installed before the Hellgate Meadows Residential Neighborhood Association took over from the developer, during a period when the developer was concentrating on other subdivisions. They have been "grandfathered", but new nonconforming fences will not be allowed unless compelling circumstances convince the HMRNA Board to grant a variance.

Here's some of the language from the "Architectural Standards" document:

New construction shall be consistent with the architecture of Missoula's historic neighborhoods, particularly as seen along the streets and boulevards, in terms of height, scale, setback and rhythm; relationship of materials, texture, details and color; roof shape, orientation, proportion and rhythm of openings. Use of materials should be similar in scale and texture to those used traditionally, and the employment of new and creative interpretations of details is to be encouraged.

Missoula's historic residential neighborhoods, in which the homes were constructed between the late 1800s. and into the 1930s, are characterized by a variety of styles. These style can be divided into two categories: those developed during the Victorian period of 1860 to 1900, and those developed subsequently to this time, during the Arts and Crafts Movement. The former is an effort to utilize ancient and classical forms and details of architecture, the latter is a design effort that deliberately turned its back on historical precedent for decoration and design. The Arts and Crafts Movement did not attempt to eliminate ornamentation, but merely modernize it, and to remove most traces of its historic origins.

Landscape/Retaining Walls and Fences

- Brick, concrete and stone masonry
- Architecturally finished exposed concrete
- Cementitious stucco veneer
- Wood or synthetic wood pickets, lattice and solid boards
- Painted or coated welded steel or iron

Why is chain link not included in the list of permitted materials?

Although chain link fencing was first introduced to the USA in the early 1900s, it didn't become popular for residential use until after WWII, and is not appropriate for use within Hellgate Meadows.