

## CORONA HIGHLANDS

### ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE GUIDELINES (2012)

To download a PDF of the 2012 Architectural Guidelines, [click here](#).

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#### **Introduction:**

This set of guidelines and useful information has been prepared by the current Architectural Review Committee ("ARC") for Corona Highlands and approved by the Corona Highlands Property Owners Association ("CHPOA"). We are sure you have seen numerous letters like this over the years but we think it is important to update the guidelines every couple years especially if there have been any changes to the guidelines or how they are being administered. Please review the information at your leisure.

Please use us as a resource! We want to help you optimize how you use and live in your residence and we will work with you to find solutions that meet your needs and also meet the guidelines presented below. [Back to top](#)

#### **Architectural Review Committee Mission Statement:**

The Declaration Concerning Restrictions and Improvements (recorded May 3, 1949, in Book 1837, Page 452 of Official Records of Orange County, California), hereinafter referred to as the "CC&R's", establishes the ARC. Please note that the CC&R's are valid and enforceable although there has been some sentiment expressed to the contrary. The CC&R's are a document recorded against all the properties in Corona Highlands, they "run with the land" and they continue through successive ownership of each property.

The ARC is a body comprised of three persons, appointed by the Board of Directors of the CHPOA, who are homeowners in Corona Highlands. The ARC's mission is to review and either approve or reject, by majority vote, any plans for structures, as defined below, to be erected on the lots of the Corona Highlands tract. [Back to top](#)

#### **Basis for Approval or Rejection:**

The ARC approves or rejects plans based on their adherence to:

- » Guidelines first defined in the CC&R's, subsequently clarified by the Orange County Superior Court and modified by various legal actions with regard to height limit and number of stories.
- » The City of Newport Beach Building Code including, but not limited to, setbacks, side yards, the city's definitions of "basement" and "one story", and, in the case of the "opt out" homes defined below, the city's height limit. Please note that the ARC does not give any opinions regarding a particular design's adherence to these codes.

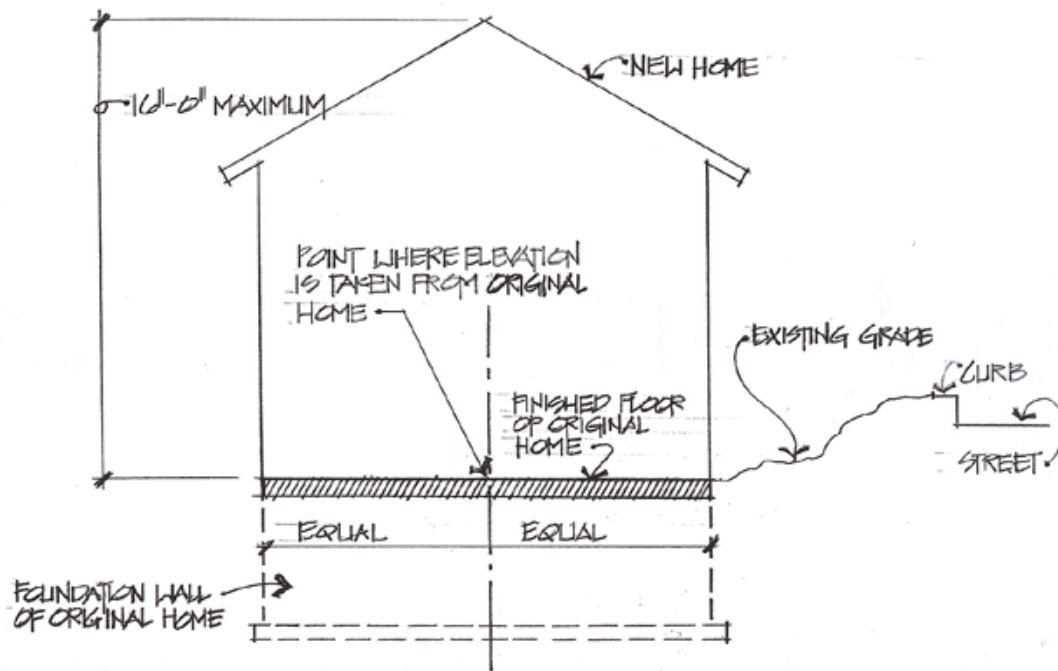
The Guidelines and Definitions sections below outline the basic criteria and methodology for determining whether proposed plans will be approved or rejected. [Back to top](#)

#### **Guidelines:**

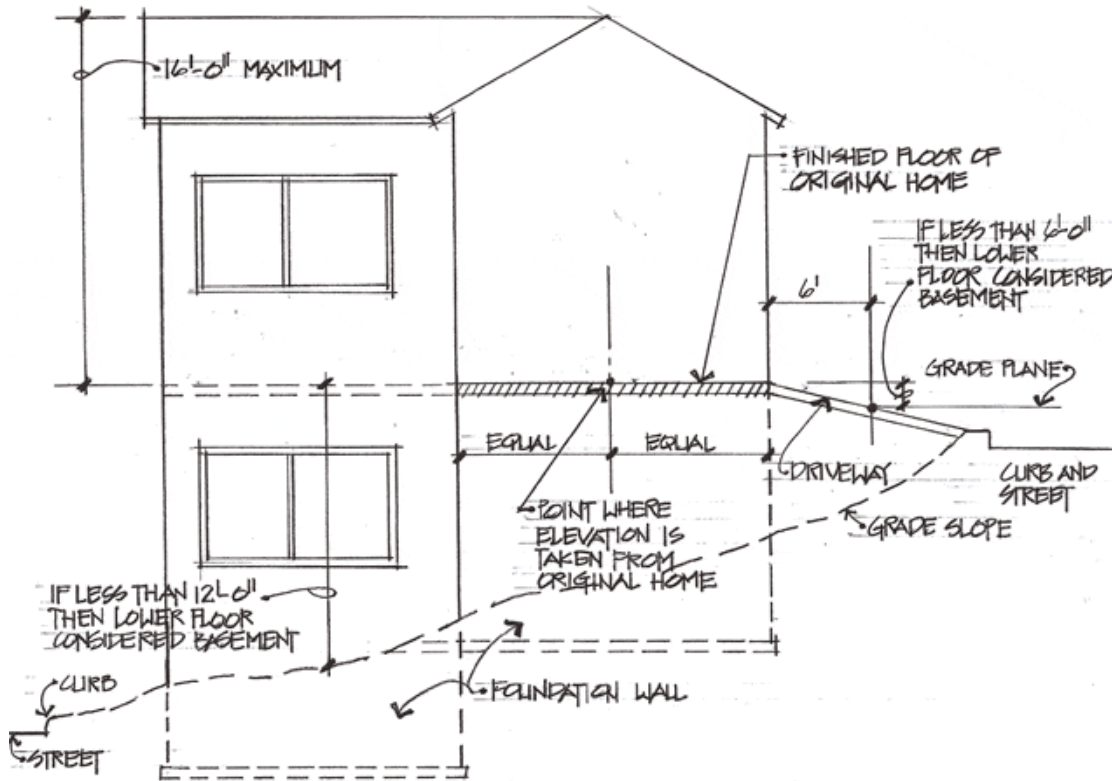
**Height Limit & Number of Stories** – The CC&R's define this guideline so that any residence, except lots 176-180 inclusive and lots 159-164 inclusive, should not be "over one story in height and the highest ridge or point thereof shall not be over sixteen (16) feet above the Finished Grade Level (defined below) of that point of said lot. The lots referenced above are located on Isabella Terrace or Seaward Road and the residences built on those lots can be up to twenty-two (22) feet above the Finished Grade Level and have up to two stories.

Based on the most recent legal action successfully negotiated by the CHPOA the ARC has been given some latitude to approve new





EXAMPLE - GRADE BELOW CURB



EXAMPLE - LOT RUNS FROM STREET TO STREET  
SIMILAR FOR LOT THAT BACKS UP TO GULLY

**Grade Plane** – Grade Plane is a concept used by the city to explain the difference between a basement and a story of a building or residence. Grade Plane is defined as “a reference plane representing the average of finished ground level adjoining the building at exterior walls. Where the finished ground level slopes away from the exterior walls, the reference plane shall be established by the lowest points within the area between the building and the lot line, or where the lot line is more than 6 feet from the building, between the building and a point 6 feet from the building.” This is a fairly complicated concept to convey in writing but the visual depictions above show our best understanding of how to calculate the Grade Plane.

**Basement** – According to the Building Code of the City of Newport Beach Building Code a basement is defined as “that portion of a building that is partly or completely below Grade Plane.”

**One Story** – According to the Building Code of the City of Newport Beach Building Code one story of a building is defined as the portion of that building between the upper surface of a floor and the upper surface of the floor or roof next above.

That is the simple part of the definition. The more important concept is how the city delineates between a two story residence and a one story residence with a basement, cellar, or unused under floor space. Currently, the city states that “a basement shall be considered as a story above grade plane where the finished surface of the floor **above** the basement is:

1. More than six (6) feet above Grade Plane; or
2. More than twelve (12) feet above the finished ground level at any point.

As many of you will notice, many residences in Corona Highlands are built on lots that are steeply sloped and, although they appear to be a two story residence from the lower street, they are in fact considered one story plus basement homes given the current definitions.

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### **Improvements that Require ARC Review and Approval**

You will need ARC review and approval for any structures to be erected, modified, refurbished, remodeled, altered or changed in any way that affects the existing structural outline or appearance of such structure located on lots within Corona Highlands. The term structures includes, but is not limited to, any buildings, sheds, garages, perimeter walls, fences, chimney stacks, or hardscape features, whether attached to the main structure or free standing on the subject property. If you are unsure if something you are planning to do to your property fits any of the definitions above please feel free to call one of us and we will work through it together with you. [Back to top](#)

### **The ARC and Views**

The ARC does not have the authority to preserve ocean or other views blocked by structures that meet the Height Limit and Number of Stories guidelines. We are very hopeful, however, that property owners in Corona Highlands will respect the value of the views their neighbors currently enjoy and minimize the effect any work they propose to do will have on those views. Corona Highlands is a very special community and it remains so because most of the homeowners here respect their neighbors and believe in upholding the principles

contained in the CC&R's. [Back to top](#)

### **The ARC Review and Approval Process**

If you are considering doing any work on your property that requires ARC review and approval, please follow the steps outlined below:

1. Put together informal concept drawings of your proposed project. Included in this informal drawing package should be floor plans; elevations showing the points at which the height limitations have been calculated; a floor plan of your existing home; and a survey of the elevations of your existing home with special attention given to elevations of the finished floor as outlined in the Finished Grade Level definition above. Obviously, you will not need to do an elevation survey and show height calculations if you are not rebuilding or doing an addition or remodel that affects the height of your home. Please note that we are not asking for anything more than will ultimately be required by the City of Newport Beach for plan submittal.
2. Set up a concept meeting with the ARC. We will want to meet with you and your architect or designer at your home to review the concept plans. This meeting is a good way for the ARC, the homeowner and the architect/designer to get to know each other and start to understand the scope of the project.
3. Provide the ARC with two (2) copies of your concept drawings and survey for our review and approval. We may ask you to erect story poles if you are going to do a major remodel or rebuilding of your home to help your neighbors understand how your project may affect them. We will review the drawings and respond to you within a short period of time. While we are reviewing the plans we will also send a notice to your proximate neighbors to let them know that you are planning to do something on your property and we will give them a few days to review the drawings if they wish to do so. Following that period, if your drawings convey a project that objectively meets the guidelines, we will provide you with a preliminary approval letter from the ARC and a stamped set of drawings. If we believe that your project will not meet the guidelines we will let you know our concerns and work with you to come up with an acceptable solution.
4. Submit two (2) sets of your final working drawings to the ARC for review. We will meet with you to go over your plans in detail. We will assume that the drawings will reflect your preliminary concept but, in the event there are changes, we will ask you to revise the drawings to conform to the guidelines and re-submit them to us. We will also want to review your landscape/hardscape plans to make sure you are making prudent tree and shrub choices that will not exceed the height limitation and obstruct your neighbors' views. Once your plans meet the guidelines we will provide you with a final approval letter from the ARC and a stamped set of your working drawings. With regard to timing of the final approval, the CC&R's provide that in the event of no action by the ARC within fifteen (15) days of filing of the two (2) sets of working drawings, the property owner can notify the ARC in writing. If the ARC fails to respond within thirty (30) days after such written notice, approval shall be deemed to have been waived. Hopefully we will never run into that situation but we hope you understand that we are a group of volunteers trying to fit this work in with our careers and family. We will endeavor, however, to treat every project with the urgency and objectivity it deserves.
5. Send us a copy of the building permit or permits you have obtained from the City of Newport Beach for our files.
6. In the event there are any significant changes in your plans after they have received final approval from the ARC, please notify us and submit the changes for approval. Also, if you decide not to proceed with your project, please notify us.

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### **Final Thoughts**

Although we have stated it many times in this document, we want to reiterate that the ARC is here to be both a resource and a governing body that will strive to protect the interests of all the residents of Corona Highlands. This is a strong community that is held together by a common desire among most of our residents to live in an environment where neighbors respect one another without the need for an obtrusive, overbearing and costly homeowners association like many of the neighboring communities. The CHPOA, like the ARC, is a body made up of your peers who volunteer their time to help maintain the community as it was originally conceived without asking for excessive dues or trying to over-reach its authority. We would ask that every resident of Corona Highlands should strive to remember why this is such a special community and support the actions of the ARC and CHPOA. [Back to top](#)

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