

The

# Design Approval Process

of

## BLOUNT SPRINGS BLUE HOLE VILLAGE

Blount County, ALABAMA

Overview

Detailed Procedures

- *New Construction*
- *Alteration of Existing*

Submittal Forms

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*There are a number of builders and architects who are familiar with the design approval and construction process at Blount Springs. We believe there are others who wish to learn the process. Use of these professionals should help expedite and smooth construction of your home at Blount Springs.*

*The following document is provided to you so that you understand the overall process. In the event you select architects or contractors who are not familiar with the Blount Springs review process or you choose to work without these professionals, this document provides you with an outline and checklist to follow. The document is designed to be easily read and understood. Should you have any questions, please contact the chair of the Architectural Review Panel (ARP) or the Town Architect for their input.*

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## Overview

The charm of Blount Springs is based on two seemingly opposite characteristics: the diversity of individual home design, and the harmony resulting from thoughtful enforcement of the Town of Blount Springs Codes. Individual design allows creativity, uniqueness and fresh viewpoints, while the Codes make sure that certain themes tie the homes together into a satisfying whole. If you, your designer, and your contractor work with the Codes and the Design Approval Process, we think you will be pleased with the result.

The various steps of the Design Approval Process are intended to guide you at each critical stage. For New Construction or a Major Addition, these steps are:

- Step 1: Review the Relevant Documents (Construction Patterns for Blount Springs)
- Step 2: Have your lot surveyed
- Step 3: Choose a designer
- Step 4: Begin the design process
- Step 5: Informal Sketch Review meeting with ARP or Town Architect
- Step 6: Preliminary Review by ARP
- Step 7: Final Review by ARP
- Step 8: Selection of a General Contractor or Builder
- Step 9: Construction Observation

By meeting with the Architectural Review Panel early in the process, the Panel can give you valuable suggestions and help you avoid costly changes in your plans later.

The address of the Review Panel for all submittals and correspondence is:

Blount Springs Architectural Review Panel  
arp@blountsprings.com

The Architectural Review Panel (ARP) is available to meet upon your request. Three complete sets of the plans and applications along with a non refundable \$1000 ARP review fee need to be submitted 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting to give the staff time for review. You and your designer are not required to appear in person at the meeting during which your application will be reviewed. If you submit plans digitally (pdf), you will be required to reimburse printing expenses prior to the meeting.

In addition to the Blount Springs Codes, you are responsible for making sure that construction conforms to the 2009 International Residential Code (IRC). If the Review Panel notes noncompliance with the IRC, you will be required to make necessary changes. However, the

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ARP is concerned primarily with aesthetic considerations, and cannot be responsible for design or construction defects affecting the safety or structural integrity of the house.

The State of Alabama Licensed Builder or Owner Builder (with executed Homeowner Builder form issued by the Alabama Home Builder Licensure Board) shall provide the Blount Springs Association Architectural Review Panel a *Certification of Compliance* from a *Certified Residential Inspector* who holds current certification with the *International Code Council*. The Certification must certify that the building was constructed to the current Minimum Standards of the International Code Council for Residential Construction as adopted by the State of Alabama in HB109. **No Certificate of Occupancy shall be issued before the Certificate of Compliance is provided to the Architectural Review Committee for review.**

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## Procedure for New Construction

Here are the steps you will need to follow for New Construction, Major Renovations, or Additions:

### Step 1: Review the Relevant Documents

Read and make sure you understand all the following materials:

- Construction Patterns for Blount Springs
  - a. Explains the Architectural concepts behind Blount Springs
  - b. Contains lists of approved building materials
  - c. Gives examples of correct and incorrect architectural detailing
  - d. Contains the documents listed below:
- Blount Springs Codes and Design Documents
  - a. Master Plan and Building Type Diagrams, which together map all lots and public areas and designate the type of building which may be constructed on each
  - b. Urban Code, which establishes yards and parking areas, building height, and requirements for porches, balconies, and out-buildings for the various types of lots
  - c. Architectural Code, which guides the design of buildings and the materials of which they may be constructed
- Design Approval Process (this booklet)

### Step 2: Surveying Your Lot

You will need to hire a licensed surveyor to make a certified survey of your lot showing all of the following:

- Property lines with dimensions and bearings
- All roads, footpaths, utilities, and other improvements on or adjacent to lot
- Existing contours at appropriate intervals (typically 2')
- Elevation and centerline of street
- Locations of all existing trees over 6" in caliper
- Any unusual conditions

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Step 3: Choose a Designer

You will want to find an architect or other residential designer who will work well with you and who is sympathetic to the purposes of the Codes. Your contractor may also be able to draw up plans or you may opt to use published plans that are suitable for Blount Springs. In this booklet, we will use the word “designer” to include architects (licensed) and other residential designers.

If you choose a designer that is unfamiliar with the Codes, we strongly recommend that the designer meet first with the Town Architect so that the designer understands that philosophy of Blount Springs and how the Codes work. If the designer does not feel completely comfortable with the Codes, you would do well to find out early so that you can select another designer or design.

Step 4: Beginning the Design Process

Spend time on your lot at different times of the day. View it from different angles. Try to imagine your lot with houses built on adjoining lots. How does the light change throughout the day? Where are the best views? Where are the nicest trees? Have your designer visit the lot as well.

Now think about what you want and need in your house. Discuss your requirements with your designer, but don't count on words alone to communicate. Sometimes a picture can do it better. Cut out photographs and drawings from magazines and paste them into a notebook with notes to your designer about what attracts you to that picture and what you don't like. Create Pinterest or Houzz notebooks to collect images you have seen on the internet. If your designer understands what you want, he or she will be able to design something you like with fewer false starts and less frustration for everyone.

Once your designer knows what you want, give him or her the opportunity to come up with something fresh and new. Start with the general idea – how the home is positioned on the lot, the number, relative size and relationship of the rooms, a sketch of the outside appearance -and reach agreement on those. Then refine as you go along. Design is a circular process of changing and refinement.

Step 5: Sketch Review (Optional, but Recommended)

To make sure you and your designer are on the right track, you may arrange for a sketch review. The ARP may be able to make recommendations at this early stage which will improve your design. A site plan showing the placement of buildings, driveways and other proposed alterations to the site, along with sketched floor plans and elevations are helpful at this point; perspective sketches are optional. **Form A, the Sketch Review Application**, should be submitted with your materials.

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Step 6:      Preliminary Review

Following sketch review, as soon as you are ready, you must submit plans for preliminary review. This review at the schematic stage allows timely incorporation of the Codes' provisions, avoiding revisions to the final construction documents.

This review requires the following to be submitted:

1. **Form B, Preliminary Review Application**
1. **Form C, Architectural Questionnaire**
2. Survey with all information listed in Step 2
3. Site Plan at 1" = 20' showing:
  - a. North arrow
  - b. Property lines and setbacks with dimensions
  - c. Proposed site drainage
  - d. Buildings, with entry area delineated and overhangs shown as dashed lines
  - e. Relationship to all adjacent houses or adjacent structures, if any
  - f. Fence location
  - g. Garbage enclosure
  - h. Drives and walks
  - i. HVAC location
  - j. Any other data relative to the placement of the house
  - k. Location of all trees over 6" in caliper, including those to be removed
4. Floor plans at ¼" = 1' showing:
  - a. All walls
  - b. Room use labeled
  - c. All windows and door with swings shown
  - d. All overhangs of floors or roofs shown as dashed lines
  - e. Overall dimension of plans
  - f. Driveway location, garbage, and HVAC enclosures
5. Elevations at ¼"=1', one for each major exposure, showing:
  - a. Openings, doors, and windows
  - b. Principal materials rendered
  - c. Relation to grade level
  - d. Overall height from road grade to eave of sloped roof
  - e. Roof pitch

Shortly after the meeting, you will be notified concerning approval or any changes that need to be made before the plans can be approved.

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Step 7:      Final Review

Following preliminary review, as soon as you are ready, your final review application must be submitted. The foundation shall be staked on the site and the following documents are required:

1. **Form D, Final Review Application**
1. **Form E, Construction Specifications Form** completed by the designer. A door and window schedule must be attached, along with cut sheets as specified on Form E. Exterior paint samples are to be submitted and samples of actual materials for walls and roof are required.
2. Copy of approved Preliminary Application materials
3. Site Plan at 1" = 20' showing in addition to previous information:
  - a. Water and sewer service
  - b. Location, dimension and material for walks and drives
  - c. Limits of construction activity, beyond which no grading, construction, traffic, or storage of materials will be permitted
  - d. Exterior light location and type
4. Floor plans at ¼" = 1' showing in addition to previous information:
  - a. Exterior and interior walls shown and dimensioned
  - b. Wall, window, and door openings dimensioned
  - c. All fixtures, cabinets, and appliances
5. Elevations at ¼" = 1', one for each major exposure, showing in addition to previous information:
  - a. Openings, doors, and windows with materials rendered
  - b. Dimensioned corner, door, and window trim
  - c. Fence elevations
6. Structural Plans at ¼" = 1' including:
  - a. Foundation plan dimensioned
  - b. Floor framing plans
  - c. Roof framing plans
7. Sections:
  - a. All major sections at ¼" = 1'
  - b. Typical wall section at ¾" = 1'
  - c. Specific details of all trim elements, including fence, railing, and deck details
1. Landscape plan showing existing vegetation, size and species for each new plant
2. Electrical plans, HVAC plans, and plumbing plans

The materials approved at this final review will be your working construction documents and cannot be changed without the approval of the Review Panel.

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#### Step 8: Selection of General Contractor

You may select a contractor from the list of approved contractors available from the Architectural Review Panel, or may request that a builder be reviewed for approval by the ARP by submitting **Form H: Contractor Application**. Your contractor will need to be licensed, comply with insurance requirements, agree to abide by the construction regulations, and submit the \$1000 contractor deposit. If you select an approved contractor, or if your contractor is reviewed and approved, you may begin construction after you submitted and received approval from the ARP on **Form F**, the **Construction Notification** Form, and have located a construction dumpster and portable toilet on the site (both of which are to remain until construction is complete.)

Although you will be responsible for making your own contract with your builder, we strongly recommend for your own protection that the contract provide that the construction will not be considered complete until approved by the Architectural Review Panel.

#### Step 9: Construction Observation

Construction of your house may be observed several times by ARP staff to assure that you home is being constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications approved by the Review Panel. These observations are solely for the benefit of the Architectural Review Panel. If the observer notices [construction](#) defects affecting the safety or structural integrity of the house or failure to comply with the International Residential Code, the ARP may require correction, but the observer is not liable for failure to note any such defects.

At present, Blount County has no system for county inspection of construction.

#### Modifications to Approved Plans

During construction or later on, you may decide to improve or modify the original approved plans or specifications. Any change to the approved plans and specifications requires prior review and written approval of the ARP. A request for review of the proposed modifications must include:

##### **1. Form G, Minor Change Application**

1. Letter of intent, drawings, site plan, and materials cut sheet or sample as necessary to show the change.

Minor changes may be approved in writing by the ARP staff. More significant changes require approval by the ARP. Staff shall determine whether a change is considered minor.

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## Procedure for Altering Existing Construction

When considering minor alterations to a completed property, please review the Urban Code and Architectural code. To maintain the character of Blount Springs, any changes that affect elements that were regulated when the house was initially developed are subject to architectural review. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Changing paint color
- Installing or Replacing porch underpinning or foundation lattice
- Installing or replacing exterior light fixtures or hardware
- Re-roofing with a different color or style of material
- Installing or changing hardscapes

Any design change to the existing construction requires prior review and written approval of the ARP. A request for review of the proposed alterations must include:

1. **Form J, Modification to Existing Property Request Form**
2. Letter of intent, drawings, site plan, and materials cut sheet or sample as necessary to show the change.

Minor changes may be approved in writing by the ARP staff. More significant changes require approval by the ARP. Staff shall determine whether a change is considered minor.