

LANDSCAPING/FOREST MANAGEMENT

Q. Does the OKH Committee have any responsibilities for landscaping and/or forest/land management.

A. Reference: “Old King’s Highway Regional Historic District Commission’s Bulletin” (October, 2008). It is the guide that OKH Committee members use in making their decisions.

The OKH Committee has **some** jurisdiction over landscaping within the District through its charge to protect settings (Section 1-Purpose). When a new building is constructed, the Committee has a responsibility to ensure that trees are preserved where possible and that new vegetation is planted to enhance the new construction. For example, new houses are required to have foundation plantings to soften the “new house” look and work towards screening the foundation as they grow.

In addition, the Committee must approve **landscaping structures**, such as fences, hedges, walls, flagpoles, gates, water features, permanent fireplaces or chimeneas, etc. The Committee does not oversee an owner’s choice of flowers, etc., nor does it oversee the location, shape, etc. of a garden—just any permanent structures associated with it.

The Committee does not oversee ground-level projects, such as driveways, walkways, or ground-level patios. It does, however, oversee features that might be added to such projects; e.g., a stone wall to edge a patio or built-in seating; a permanent stone grill or outdoor kitchen. **Structures** that are above ground level (Section 3 – Definitions).

Projects that are visible from a street or public way require a Certificate of Appropriateness application & a public hearing; projects that are not visible from a street or public way require a Certificate of Exemption. As you might imagine, some review is required to make sure that the project meets the “invisibility” criterion. That is why at least an exemption application is required.

The Committee does not have any responsibilities for forest/land management other than those listed above. In the context of preserving setting (which is one of the Committee’s charges), the Committee does encourage owners to preserve vegetation wherever possible. (See Section 10 – Powers, Functions and Duties of the Committee).