



# Exterior Improvement Guidebook



**JOSEPH  
SELVAGGIO  
INITIATIVE**

*House by House  
Block by Block*



Phillips  
Partnership



Guidelines, Procedures and Construction Standards/Recommendations  
for the Exterior Home Improvement Program  
of the Joseph Selvaggio Initiative

prepared for  
Phillips Partnership

prepared by  
Project for Pride in Living  
JLPope Associates  
Close Landscape Architecture  
Hokanson/Lunning/Wende Associates

For further information contact:  
Michelle McCafferty  
Project for Pride in Living, Inc.  
612-874-3326

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S E L V A G G I O  
I N I T I A T I V E**

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Block by Block*



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A softcover edition of this work was published by Hokanson Lunning Wende Associates, Inc. in 1999

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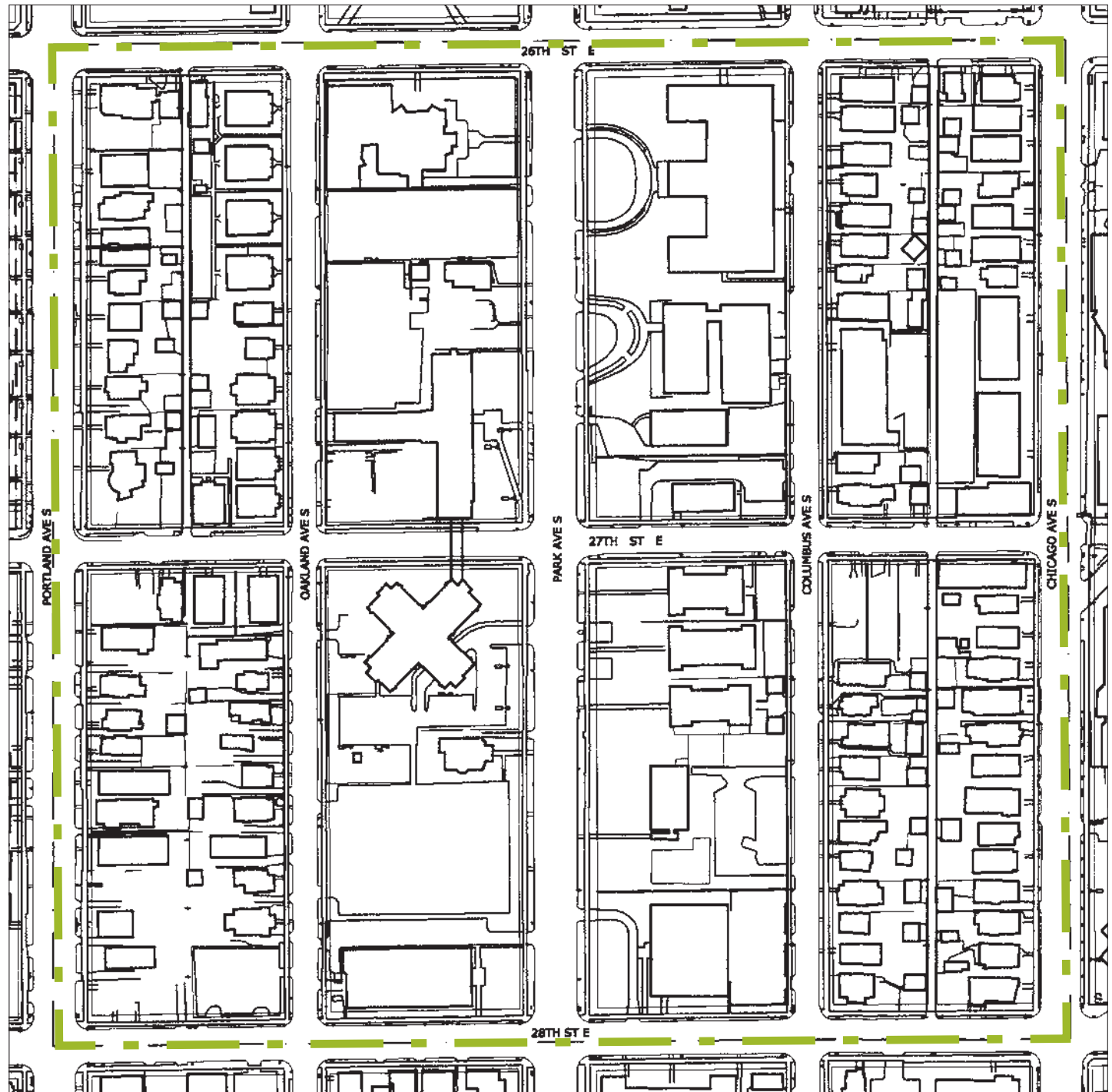
# The Joseph Selvaggio Initiative

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The Joseph Selvaggio Initiative seeks improved affordable rental housing, strengthened single-family home ownership, and a revitalized streetscape for an eight-block area between 26th and 28th Streets, and Portland and Chicago Avenues.

As part of the Initiative, Abbott Northwestern Hospital has assumed responsibility for administering \$1.2 million in grants and loans to project participants through the Exterior Home Improvement program. Abbott Northwestern developed the Guidebook for this program through a series of informational interviews, one-on-one discussions as well as small group, block club and Project Advisory Committee meetings. The Project Advisory Committee is comprised of neighborhood residents and institutional representatives from within the eight-block area.

The Phillips Partnership established this Initiative to honor the work of Joseph Selvaggio, whose career has been dedicated to service and pride in living for Phillips' residents. We hope that the improvements to the homes described in this Guidebook will provide a "house-by-house, block-by-block" tribute to his extraordinary work.





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# Introduction

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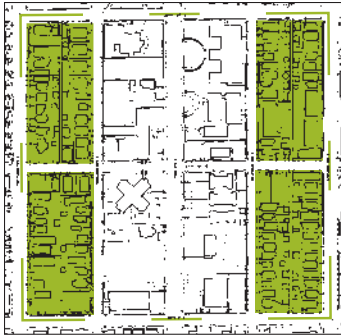
## Goals for the Improvement Program

1

To improve exterior conditions of properties in order to achieve a positive visible impact to enhance the living and working environment of the neighborhood.

2

To encourage and support property owners in making necessary health and safety improvements to enhance the livability of the neighborhood for residents.



## Program Outline

Program guidelines have been developed in the hope that every non-institutional property owner on the west side of Chicago, the east side of Columbus, the west side of Oakland and the east side of Portland Avenues will take advantage of available funds for exterior improvements to their homes. The Program will be administered by Project for Pride in Living.

### Exterior Improvements Program Overview of Guidelines

- Each qualifying property owner on Chicago, Columbus, Oakland and Portland between 26th and 28th Streets may receive a grant for up to \$7,500 for exterior improvements.
- To qualify owners must be current on mortgage and insurance payments, property taxes and water bills, be willing to maintain their property after improvements are made, and be willing to participate in community activities.

## Architectural Design and Construction Guidelines

The guidelines will help define the character, constructability and visual impact of the anticipated improvements. They address the architecture, issues of safety and security, as well as site improvements. The architectural guidelines have been assembled to suggest the important elements and the desired direction for construction.

## Site and Landscape Guidelines

The site and landscape guidelines have been assembled to aid in design direction, and to provide helpful information in the construction and maintenance of each element.

## Use of this Document

The intention of this document is to serve as an on-going reference guide for the homeowner, not only for the current projects, but also for future work.


## Intent and Use of the Document

The **Photographs and Sketches** convey the image of the topic area (roof, window, fence, etc.) and show the components of construction.

The **Component Parts** identify the various product materials and relevant location.

The **Visual Issues** highlight any pertinent considerations regarding “look” or appropriateness.

The Narrative on **Constructability** outlines the process, material specifications, product names and finishing requirements for the topic area.



**Component Parts/Visual Issues**

- Drip caps over windows and doors
- Caulking at windows and doors
- Wind and vapor barrier before new siding
- Width of siding

### Exterior Siding

**Related Considerations**

- Conditions of wood trim and window trim

**Submission Requirements**

- Documentation of existing conditions
- Product information

**Constructability**

- Note whether the contractor is planning to tear off the old siding or side over existing.
- Remove and reinstall (or replace) any downspouts, shutters, cables, awnings, etc. that are attached to side walls.
- Hammer down any exposed nails.
- Apply high grade clear silicone caulking around all windows and doors.
- Flash any deck ledger boards and any brick or stone ledges.
- Install drip caps over windows and doors.
- If tearing off original siding, apply rigid insulation to walls.

- Apply wind and vapor barrier over rigid insulation or over existing siding.
- Apply siding, note the length. Nail every 16" to studs (nails should not be driven tight).
- Encase ends of siding with J-Channels.
- Note whether the contractor is planning to run the siding under obstructions or plans to install J-Channels around the outlets, lights, dryer vents and faucets.
- Note the material, width and color of siding.
- Note whether the contractor will replace the rotted wood or if they will charge above the bid amount to do so.

EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENT GUIDEBOOK Joseph Salvaggio Initiative

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# Neighborhood Characteristics

## Lot Development

This neighborhood reflects a traditional Midwestern interpretation of lot development and block continuity. Newly planned communities are returning to these elements of definition between sidewalk and the private yard and porches at a reasonable distance from the sidewalk to allow both privacy and degrees of neighboring.

## Front Yard Definition

The line of the private yard at the sidewalk is an important contact and image point. This sets the formality or informality for entering the private yard and the sequence of entering the house. Fences and plantings define this public/private realm and the spatial orientation within the site.

## Site Characteristics

- House facades and porch continuity are aligned for the entire block.
- Formal landscape arrangement.
- Plantings in scale with the residence.
- Plantings define and shape the private yard.
- Change in elevation provides degree of separation from public sidewalk to private yard.
- Fences, low walls and plant material reinforce an added element of privacy.





## Porches

This key element establishes the social framework and personal interaction of the block. Distance from the sidewalk and street, height above the sidewalk and the transparency of the railings all contribute to the neighborliness of the block.



## Importance of Detailing

The scale and texture of materials are key elements in the unique composition of each house.



## Detailing Characteristics

- Steps up to porch define another layer of privacy.
- Railings are see-through.
- Ornamentation.
- Turned wood columns.
- Scale and texture of siding materials.
- Proportions of trimboards.

The combination of these elements in the delightful variety that individual tastes provide are what makes a cluster of houses look like a neighborhood. The overall effect of the porches, setbacks and interesting architectural details in doors, windows, corner boards, eave design and facing boards create the fabric of the streetscape. Phillips neighborhood was established with careful attention to these elements, and maintaining them into the twenty-first century is the basis for well-justified community pride.





## Component Parts/Visual Issues

- Ridge Vent
- Roof Boards
- Fascia Board
- Metal Valley
- Metal Drip Edge
- Shingles
- Gutter
- Soffit

## Related Conditions

- Condition of existing fascia boards, gutters, etc.
- Soffit replacement

## Submission Requirements

- Shingle sample
- Product specification

## Constructability

- Protect siding and shrubbery.
- Clean and haul away debris, a magnet to be dragged across the lawn to pick up nails after completion or in the spring.
- Remove all existing roofing material down to roof boards, if job is a tearoff.
- Remove old nails.
- Replace deteriorated roof boards or sheathing. May state as a “time and materials” bid with a “not to exceed” maximum cost. Make sure a maximum dollar figure is given so that the amount may be written into the grant.)
- \* If roof boards are spaced more than 1/2” apart, city code requires that they be replaced with 1/2” plywood, oxboard or filled-in.
  - Install ice and water shield 6 feet up all drip edges, 3 feet wide centered in all valleys, 1 foot around chimney and all roof fixtures.
- Install felt to the roof.
- Install 24 - inch wide, 26 - gauge metal valleys, seal.
- Install new 24 - gauge metal chimney flashing, and plumbing cap flashing.
- Install metal drip edge or gutter apron on all drip edges.
- Replace vents, consider whether additional roof vents should be installed.
- Install shingles (make sure of brand and color selection), with at least one inch long nails, 4 per shingle. No staples.
- Install ridge cap to peak of roof if used.
- If the roof is flat (pitch less than 4:12), instead of shingles, a 60 mil. fully adhered membrane should be used.



# Exterior Painting

## Related Considerations

- Replacement of deteriorated siding/trim

## Submission Requirements

- Documentation of existing conditions
- Paint/stucco samples
- Warranty information



## Component Parts/Visual Issues

- Trim on fascia boards and windows
- Columns
- Railings
- Base color of siding
- Gutter and Downspout
- Shutters

## Constructability

- Powerwash exterior surfaces with detergent injection.
- Scrape loose paint.
- Prime bare wood.
- One coat of paint may be sufficient if the color is to remain the same. If there is a significant color change or the siding is in poor condition, two coats may be needed.
- Instead of repainting window trim and fascia, consider wrapping them with aluminum for a similar, yet low-maintenance, look.
- Note the warranty length, exclusions, and what it covers (e.g., peeling and bubbling).
- Most homes painted before 1978 contain some lead-based paint, which should be handled with caution.





## Component Parts/Visual Issues

- Drip caps over windows and doors
- Caulking at windows and doors
- Wind barrier before new siding
- Width of siding

# Exterior Siding

## Constructability

- Note whether the contractor is planning to tear off the old siding or side over existing.
- Remove and reinstall (or replace) any downspouts, shutters, cables, awnings, etc. that are attached to side walls.
- Hammer down any exposed nails.
- Apply high - grade clear silicone caulking around all windows and doors.
- Flash any deck ledger boards and any brick or stone ledges.
- Install drip caps over windows and doors.
- If tearing off original siding, apply rigid insulation to walls.
- Apply wind and vapor barrier over rigid insulation or over existing siding.
- Apply siding, note the length. Nail every 16" to studs (nails should not be driven tight).
- Encase ends of siding with J-Channels.
- Note whether the contractor is planning to run the siding under obstructions or plans to install J-Channels around the outlets, lights, dryer vents and faucets.
- Note the material, width and color of siding.
- Note whether the contractor will replace the rotted wood or if they will charge above the bid amount to do so.
- Maintain the width and detail of existing wood trim.

## Related Considerations

- Conditions of wood trim and window trim

## Submission Requirements

- Documentation of existing conditions
- Product information

# Stucco

## Related Considerations

- One coat for re-dashing
- Three coats for new stucco in deteriorated/replacement conditions

## Submission Requirements

- Documentation of existing conditions



## Component Parts/Visual Issues

Install drip caps over windows and doors

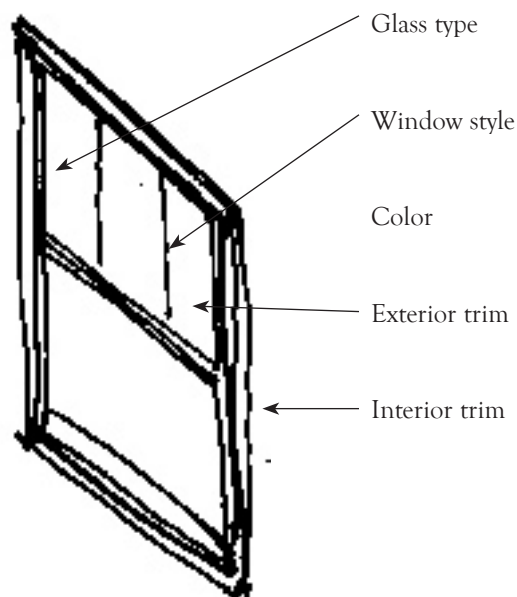
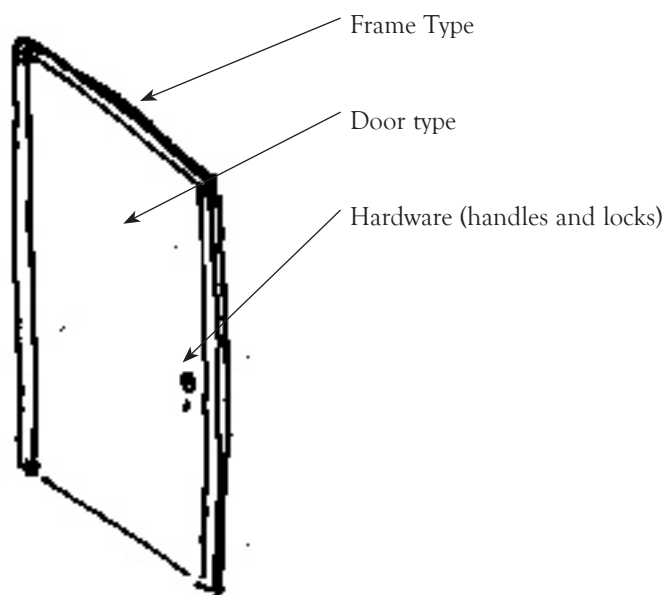
Repair cracks and holes

## Constructability

- Note whether the contractor proposes to sand blast the original stucco or power wash and lightly sand. This decision is dependent upon the condition of the existing stucco.
- Flash any deck ledger boards and any brick or stone ledges.
- Install drip caps over windows and doors.
- Repair all cracks and holes.
- Scrape, sand, caulk, and putty wood as necessary.
- Repair/replace cracked and deteriorated conditions.
- Re-stucco entire surface area.
- Tint color is integral with the stucco mix.
- Note the warranty length, exclusions, and what it covers.
- Color and texture to be chosen by owner.

# Doors and Windows

## Component Parts/Visual Issues



## Constructability

### Exterior Door Replacement:

- Style and color of doors, interior and exterior trim (Make sure exterior and interior finishes are clarified so you are satisfied how the new will match the existing).
- Caulk exterior joints with high quality silicone, noting caulk color.
- Caulk interior joints with high quality latex.
- Install new drip cap.
- Insulate the shim space with minimal expanding foam sealant.
- Hardware to include locks and lift handles.

### Window Replacement:

- Specify the type of glass (for example, Low-E, argon filled).
- Style and color of windows, interior and exterior trim. (Make sure exterior and interior finishes are clarified so you are satisfied how the new will match the existing.)
- Remove old sash weights and insulate in cavity.
- Replace sash jamb liner.
- Caulk exterior joints with high quality silicone, noting caulk color.
- Caulk interior joints with high quality latex.
- Install new drip cap.
- Insulate the shim space with minimal expanding foam sealant.
- Hardware to include locks and lift handles.

### Related Considerations

- Existing head, jamb and sill condition

### Submission Requirements

- Documentation of existing conditions
- Product information

# Repair/ Replacing Cornices, & Decorative Details

## Related Considerations

- Condition of materials

## Submission Requirements

- Documentation of existing conditions



## Component Parts/Visual Issues

- Roof Cornice
- Detailed Trim
- Porch Roof Edge
- Porch Columns Base and Cap Details
- Porch Railings
- Wood or Concrete Steps
- Stone Columns
- Porch Base Enclosure

## Constructability

- Replace rotted wood; if the wood is decorative and difficult to match or if the rotted area is small, the piece could be saved by scraping away the spongy wood, soaking the remaining area with consolidant, and rebuilding missing areas with epoxy filler. Be sure the Contractor is aware of this intention, as the standard is to replace.
- Replacement should match details/character of the era. Review replacement material with Contractor prior to installation.
- Fill cracks with wood filler.
- Caulk anywhere water could penetrate (usually inside corners).
- Prime all bare wood with oil based paint.
- Paint with acrylic latex paint specifying satin, semi-gloss or gloss.
- Have the Contractor include the brand name of the paint they will be using. Examples of brand names are Benjamin Moore and Glidden.

# Porch Maintenance



## Component Parts/ Visual Issues

Ceiling/Roof

Railing

Overhang Conditions

Support Columns

Flooring

Steps

Foundation



## Constructability

### Structure:

- Examine the structure of the porch. The footings which support the porch should be holding firm. If the porch appears to sag away from the house, there may be no footings under the porch or they may be failing.

### Flooring:

- Porch flooring may weaken over time. If boards are missing or feel spongy when walked on, they may need to be replaced or joists below need reinforcing. Use boards of the same dimension as the existing boards unless the entire floor is in need of replacement.

### Railings:

- Railings around a porch more than 30" above adjacent ground and must conform with City codes. They must be at least 36" high and spaced less than 4" apart. Handrails on stairs must be 1 1/4" to 2" diameter, not be less than 34" high and not exceed 38" from top to nose of treads.

### Ceiling:

- The porch ceiling may have cracked or peeling paint. Wet scrape the surface and be sure to collect any and all paint chips on a poly covering. If boards are missing, replace with boards of similar size and type.

## Related Considerations

- Porches over interior space
- Structural stability

## Submission Requirements

- Documentation of existing conditions
- Information on replacement materials



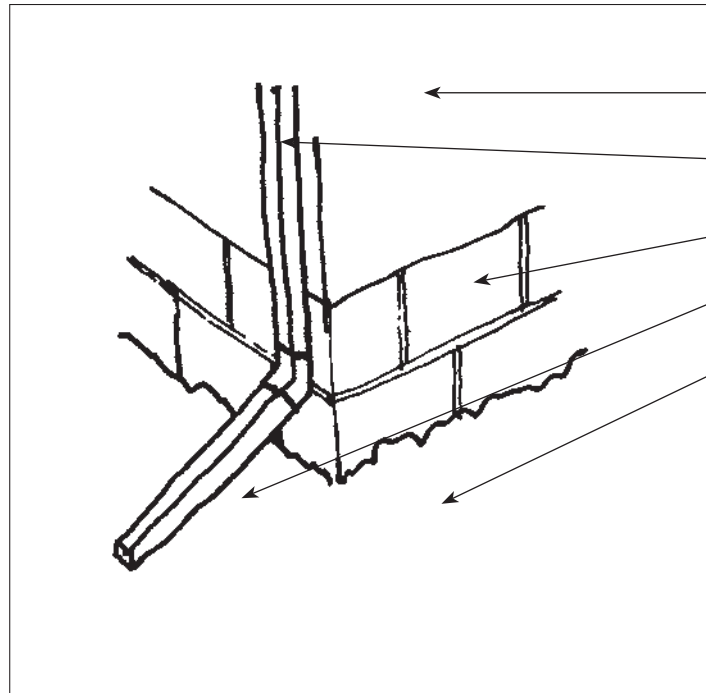
# Masonry and Foundation Repair

## Related Considerations

- Structural stability

## Submission Requirements

- Documentation of existing conditions



## Component Parts/Visual Issues

- Siding
- Downspout
- Concrete block or stone foundation wall
- Drainpipe extension
- Positive drainage away from foundation

## Constructability

### Foundation

- Examine the foundation carefully. Any cracks that are found can be caulked. Cracked or deteriorated mortar joints may need to be repaired to prevent water penetration into the basement.
- Examine the ground level around the foundation. If the grade slopes toward the foundation, raise the grade 12 inches or more for positive drainage away from the house.
- If the house has gutters and downspouts, examine them carefully. If necessary to replace, install new seamless aluminum gutters on drip edges of main and porch roofs. Install matching 4" downspouts with 36" extensions at grade.

### Settling

- Generally, in older homes, settlement has already occurred. If the house is out of plumb, with sagging sections, a structural evaluation should be done and additional work may be needed to ensure the soundness of the structure.

### Chimney

- Examine the chimney. Missing bricks or loose masonry should be replaced. Verify the condition of the flue and clean or install a new liner if necessary.

## Component Parts/Visual Issues



## Component Parts/Visual Issues

- Shingle color and style to match main house
- Siding character/material to match main house
- Consideration of trash can location

## Repair to Existing Garages

### Related Considerations

- Structural stability
- Security

## Constructability

### Electrical work

Electrical connection to the garage should be installed by underground service from house to garage on separate circuit. Install exterior wall light fixture by service door and interior porcelain socket light fixture on ceiling, switched inside at latch side of service door. Install two interior outlets, one below switches and one on ceiling for possible future garage door opener. One might want to consider installing a flood exterior light fixture above the overhead door, switched from the garage and the rear entry of the house or a motion detector flood light above the overhead door on the alley side.

### Walls

Install a single course of concrete block on top of the slab around perimeter. Construct walls with 8' 2x4's @16" on center on treated wood plate, OSB sheathing and stucco board. Siding to match house siding.

### Doors

Install 16' x 7' non-insulated steel, sectional overhead door. Include all track, hardware, keyed lock and weatherstripping as necessary for a complete, finished installation and assure smooth operation. Install 2'8" flush pre-hung steel service door on house side of garage, with weather stripping and no threshold. Install latchset and keyed deadbolt common with house lock.

**Address** Install address numerals so they are clearly visible from the alley coming from all directions.

### Submission Requirements

- Documentation of existing condition
- Shingle and siding samples

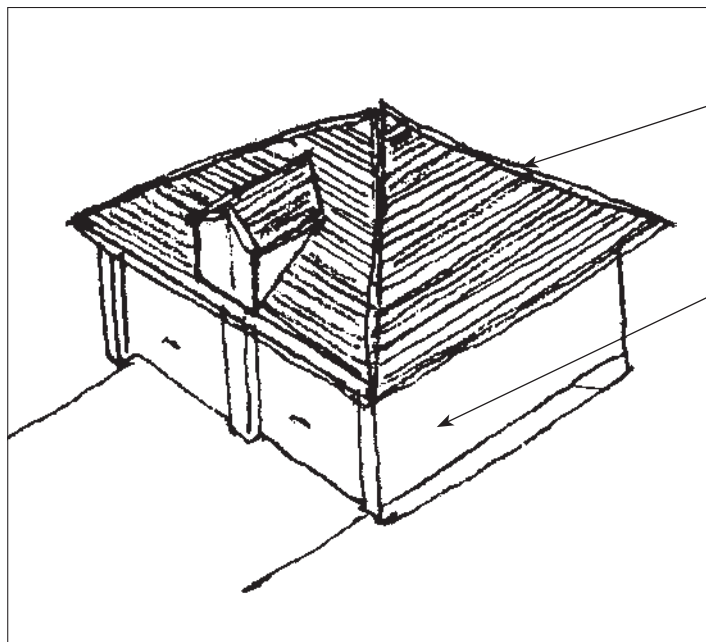
# Construction of New Garages

## Related Considerations

- Install address numerals above the overhead door of the garage for visibility.

## Submission Requirements

- Shingle and siding samples



## Component Parts/Visual Issues

Roof slope to match, or be compatible with roof slope of house

Color of garage to match color of house

Garage siding to be similar to house siding

Motion detector light above garage door

## Constructability

### Concrete Pad

- Install 4" compacted class 5 base. Install a 4" concrete slab with welded wire mesh reinforcement and thickened edges with anchor bolts per Minneapolis Inspections Department.

### Framing/Exterior Siding

- Install a single course of concrete block on top of slab around perimeter. Walls should be 8' 2x4's @ 16" on center, on treated wood plate, OSB sheathing board and siding to match house siding.

### Roof Slope

- Roof should be at the same slope as on existing house. Install ice and water membrane with metal edge at all drip edges, 15 lb felts and asphalt shingles to match house roof, 1x3 shingle trim and 12" overhangs. Staples are not to be used.

## Garage Door

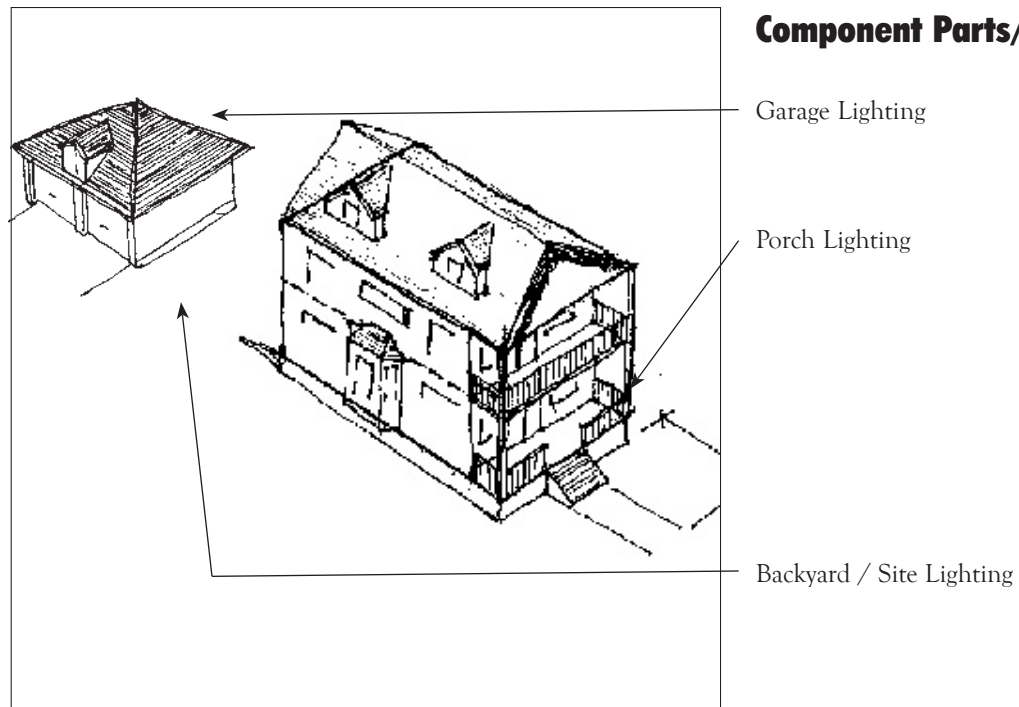
- Install non-insulated steel, sectional overhead door. Be sure that all track, hardware, keyed lock and weather-stripping are included as necessary for a complete, finished installation and assure smooth operation. Install 2'-8" flush pre-hung steel service door with weather-stripping and no threshold. Install latchset and common keyed dead bolt lock.

## Electrical/Lighting

- Electrical service to the garage should be installed by underground service from the house to garage on a separate circuit. Install exterior flood light fixture above overhead door, which can be switched from both the rear entry and from the garage. Be sure that an exterior wall light fixture is installed by the service door and that a light fixture is installed on the ceiling, which is switched at the latch side of the service door. Consider installing two interior outlets, one below switches and one on ceiling for a garage door opener.



# Exterior Lighting



## Component Parts/Visual Issues

Garage Lighting

Porch Lighting

Backyard / Site Lighting

## Constructability

### Porch

- Replace existing porch lights with new energy efficient, photo sensitive light fixtures.

### Garage/Back Door

- Install motion detector lights above the garage door and by each entrance to the house.

### Site

- Consider additional backyard lighting on the garage and on the house. Switches should be located both inside the garage and inside the backdoor of the house.
- Install new fixtures where it is easily accessible to change bulbs.

## Related Considerations

- Security

## Submission Requirements

- Product information

# Security Enhancements

## Related Considerations

### Submission Requirements

- Product information



## Component Parts/Visual Issues

Imbedded strike plate

Deadbolt

## Constructability

### Doors

- Install solid wood or metal exterior doors.
- Secure sliding glass doors and windows. Install slide bolts or locking anti-sliding blocks in sliding glass doors. Install keyed slide bolts on sliding glass windows.

### Deadbolts

- Install one-inch deadbolt locks on each residential door. Double-cylinder deadbolt locks which require a key to open from the inside can only be installed on single family homes and first floor duplexes. Keep a key in or near the lock so you can easily escape in an emergency. Remove the inside keys when you are not at home.

### Windows

- Secure double-hung windows. Use two 16-penny nails per window to pin sashes together.

### Basement Windows

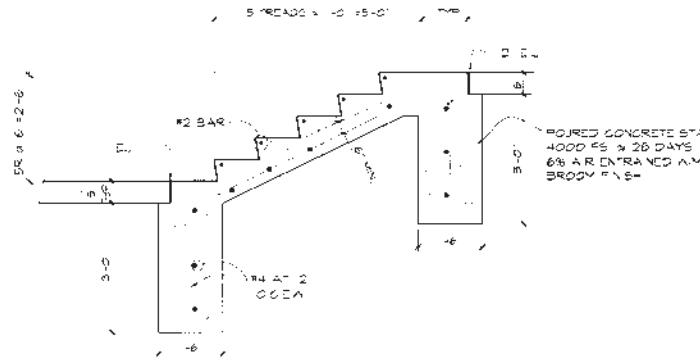
- Secure basement windows. Install pipe and wood frames over each basement window. Use one metal pipe (1" inside diameter) for each 12 vertical inches of window.
- Install glass block basement windows with vent.



## Constructability

### Concrete:

- Granite cement mix (as opposed to sand, cost is more, but it is more resistant to cracking). Do not accept ash cement mix.
- Note: Concrete work is rarely guaranteed against hairline cracks, however, there should be a guarantee against cracks greater than 1/8" thick in the first year.
- Do not include sealing the concrete. Concrete should not be sealed until fully cured, which is at least 90 days after pouring.
- Expansion joints where required. Typically expansion joints are installed next to existing structures, existing concrete, or existing walls or other permanent site elements, as well as every 10' throughout concrete surface.
- If concrete is next to the house, slope it so that it drains away from the foundation.
- Request broom finish for slip-resistant finish.



- Do not use excessive salt or de-icing chemicals on concrete as this will decrease the life of the product significantly.
- Float new stoops and stairs when adjacent to existing structures (i.e.: do not pour footings or tie new concrete into the existing structure).
- Slope driveways and walks a minimum of 2% and a maximum of 5%.
- Be sure contractor is using sufficient reinforcement in poured stairs.
- Install railings after stairs and stoops have been poured by drilling and grouting in posts. • Do not install stairs which have risers higher than 7 inches.
- Stairs that are designed with cheekwalls are preferable to those without.

## Concrete Work

## Sidewalks Stoops Stairs Driveways

### Related Considerations

- Porch repair
- Wood stairs

### Submission Requirements

# Paving and Driveway Bituminous

## Related Considerations

- Parking lot plan
- Planting plan

## Submission Requirements

- Guarantee information



## Bituminous Paving

### Component Parts/Visual Issues

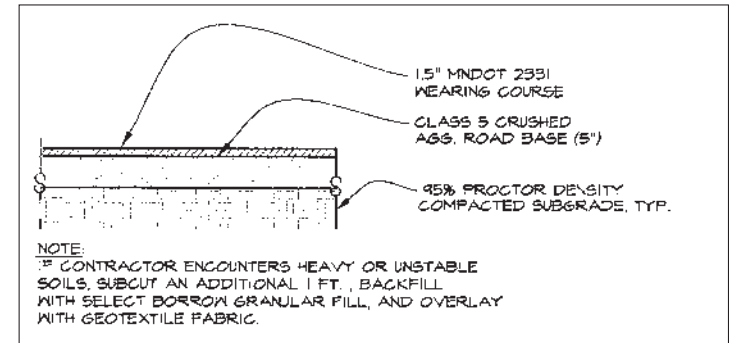
- Bituminous or asphalt is an acceptable surface materials for driveways.
- Check finished bituminous surface for imperfections that hold moisture or “birdbaths”. None should be present.

### Construction Advice

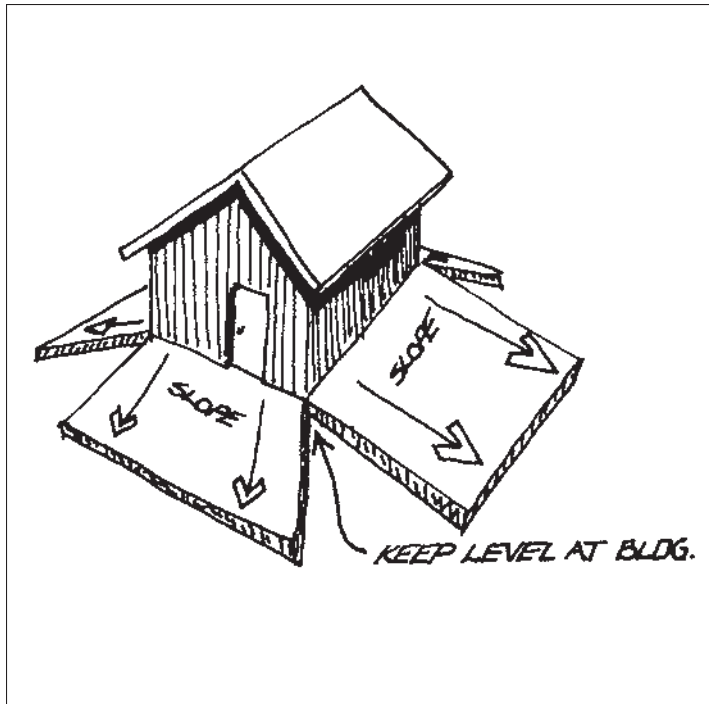
- Install asphalt when outside temperature is above 50 degrees F.
- Request a 5” compacted base of class V (five) aggregate under the bituminous surface.

## Component Parts/Visual Issues

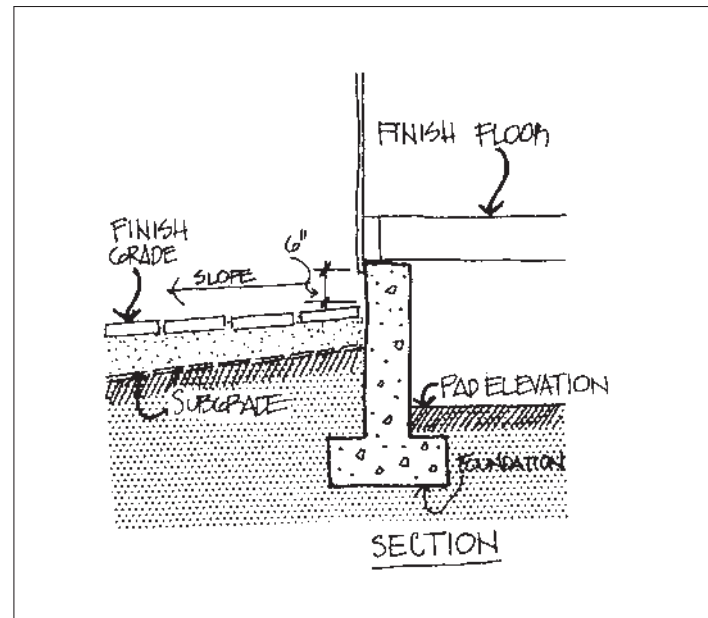
Every effort should be made to plant trees in close proximity to parking lots. This breaks up the “sea” of paving and cools the parking lot in the summer.



## Bituminous Paving Section



## Component Parts/Visual Issues



## Surface Drainage

### Component Parts/Visual Issues

- To prevent water from damaging foundation walls or basements, care should be taken to fill around homes where the earth has settled over time. • In general, yards should slope away from the house at a rate of 2%.
- Surface water should be collected at sideyard property lines and swaled towards the street or alley.

- Remove any organic material from area to be filled so that settlement does not occur in the future.
- Accept only clean fill. Fill containing debris such as rocks or waste should be rejected.
- Material should be lightly compacted and raked into the desired slope.
- Seed filled areas immediately to avoid erosion.

# Surface Drainage

### Related Considerations

- Landscaping
- Gutters

### Submission Requirements

## Constructability

# Fencing

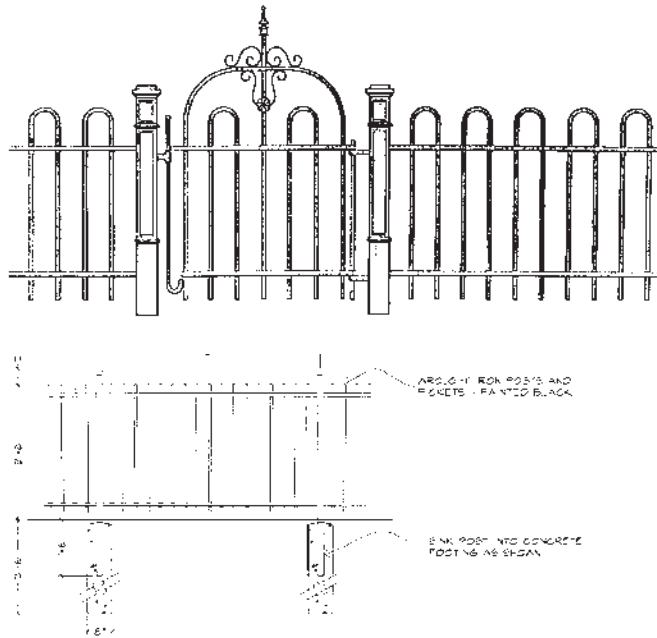
## Component Parts/Visual Issues

### Related Considerations

- Maintenance of fence
- Grade change where fence will be built

### Submission Requirements

- Drawing or other image of proposed fence with indication of materials, height, and color.



## Fences: Component Parts/Visual Issues

- The suggested material for front yard fencing is wrought iron.
- The use of chain link or wood fencing along front property line is discouraged. Use for backyards and interior sideyards (starting at face of house) is approved.
- Use materials that allow transparency for fence construction. Wrought iron and wood picket fences are good examples of this. This increases safety by providing visual surveillance of your yard from neighbors and street.
- Front yard fence height is suggested to be no higher than 42". Maintain City zoning code regulations throughout property.
- Fence location is suggested at 4" from property line where city code permits.

## Constructability

- Holes for fence posts should extend beyond frost. (3"-6" min.). Dig holes 6 inches deeper if using wood fence posts to allow room for granular material installation for drainage.
- Install fence posts following recommended spacing.
- Level posts as they are installed.
- Sink metal posts into concrete footing. Slope top of footing so water drains off and does not lead to post deterioration.
- Sink wood posts and backfill with granular material. Install concrete collar as shown in diagram. Slope surface of collar to drain surface water away from wood.
- Finish metal surfaces with primer and paint. All welds should be ground smooth. Paint shall be electrostatically applied to metal surfaces.
- Wood fences can be left to weather, or can be finished with color. Use stain instead of paint to minimize maintenance.
- All hardware and fasteners shall be galvanized.



## Component Parts/Visual Issues



Dry-laid fieldstone wall. Boulders should range from 6" - 18" diameter.



Dry-laid limestone wall. Stone widths vary from 4" - 8".



Concrete block modular system - use straight face block only to match existing limestone walls in the area.

## Retaining Walls:

### Component parts/Visual Issues

- Suggested materials for retaining walls are modular concrete block (straight face only) and dry laid stone.
- Masonry walls are acceptable, but are far more expensive than the above systems.
- Another option may be no wall at all, but using a landscaped slope (space providing)
- Dry laid walls should be terraced if they are higher than 3'.
- Do not use de-icing pellets or salt in the vicinity of a modular concrete wall. Doing so will have a significant impact on the life of the wall.
- Use colors which are common in the area already. Modular concrete is least intrusive when it is gray or buff in color. The most common stone to use for dry laid walls is limestone or fieldstone. If using fieldstone, keep diameters at 18" or less. The use of larger stone tends to have a suburban feel.

### Constructability

- Demolish and remove existing wall material. Stone from older walls may be saved for re-use if not mortared.
- Walls should be constructed using levels and string. Contractors should be required to use these tools for wall layout and construction.
- Walls should be constructed horizontally or course by course.
- Dry laid walls should have a slight batter (tilt back).
- All walls should be backfilled with granular material. Backfilling should occur as each course is laid.
- Modular block retaining walls higher than 3' should be designed by a certified engineer. Most manufacturers will provide this service free of charge.
- The use of a geogrid fabric is required to stabilize the soil behind modular concrete walls higher than 3". Manufacturers differ on this height requirement. Be prepared for additional expense if geogrid is needed.
- Be sure that the installation of the geogrid fabric is per the manufacturer recommendations. Manufacturers data should be supplied to the homeowner. In most cases the extension of the geogrid fabric into the soil must equal the height of the wall.

# Retaining Walls

### Related Considerations

- Surface drainage above or below wall
- Adjacent steps

### Submission Requirements

- Drawing, photographs, or other image of proposed wall material.
- An indication of wall color and height of wall.

# Permanent Landscaping

## Component Parts/Visual Issues



### Related Considerations

- Soil testing
- Develop an overall planting plan for property

### Submission Requirements

- Species of plant materials
- Quantities of each type of plant
- Zone recommendation for each plant type

## Permanent Landscaping

### Component Parts/Visual Issues

#### General

- Landscaping can add value, beauty and energy efficiency to your property.
- Contact the Phillips Environment & Transportation Committee at 872-6144 and ask for Lonnie Nichols to find out how you can work with the Minneapolis Park Board to replace dead or missing trees in your boulevard. (A)
- Contact your local nurseries or look in the phone book under the Nurseryman's Association to contact reputable landscape contractors.

#### Perennials/Vines/Groundcovers/Lawns

- Use groundcovers in areas you do not wish to mow.
- Use perennials for colorful foundation borders, many are relatively maintenance free once established. (B)
- Many perennials can grow to a height of 3' or more, making them useful for privacy screens.
- Vines can provide privacy and improve the visual impact of low-cost fence alternatives such as chain link (permitted in sideyards and backyards).
- Lawns are not only planted for aesthetics, grass can keep harmful elements in soil, such as lead, out of the reach of children.

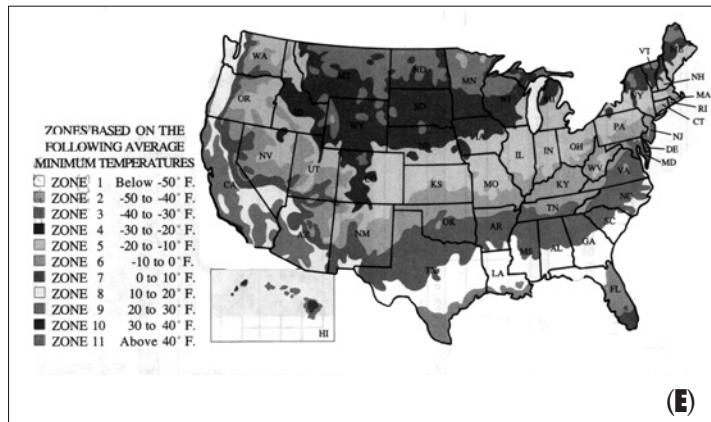
### Shrubs

- Shrubs with berries provide food for songbirds throughout all seasons. (C)
- Shrubs are a less expensive alternative to wood fences and can provide the same degree of privacy.
- Plant flowering shrubs or those with interesting shapes as accents in your lawn.
- Not all shrubs need to be pruned. Be sure to select shrubs for specific sites that will not outgrow their environment at maturity. This will lessen the need to prune. Many shrub species look their best when allowed to retain their natural shape.
- Many shrubs, such as hydrangea, provide winter interest and should not be pruned until spring - if pruning is necessary.

### Trees

- Plant shade trees on the west or east side of your home for a cooler house in the summer and more sunlight in the winter. (D)
- Avoid planting trees directly south of your home - since in the summer the high sun casts a southern shadow directly below the tree.
- Evergreen trees provide valuable wildlife habitat in the winter, and green foliage in the winter when we most need it!
- Use only hardy plant stock grown in this part of the country for successful winter survival.



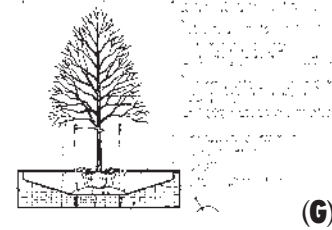
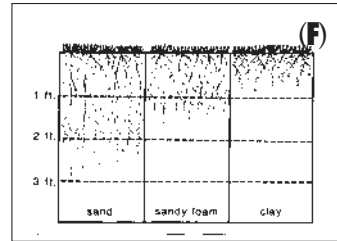


## Constructability

### General

- Be sure you have the right plant for the right sun exposure, soil type, and spatial requirements. (E)
- The University of Minnesota provides soil testing service for lawns and gardens for \$7.00 each. Obtain a sample container and instructions by writing: Soil Testing Laboratory, U of M, 1903 Hendon Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108. Follow instructions closely when gathering samples. The University will send your test results back with fertilizer recommendations that will provide adequate levels of phosphorus and potassium necessary for good plant growth without adverse effects on the environments. (H)
- Use only high quality planting soil for backfilling around plants.
- Fertilize during the growing season. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application information.
- After installation, mulch around trees and shrubs with 3' shredded hardwood mulch, and prune dead and broken branches.
- Use of rock mulch is not recommended. Rock mulch heats up the area around plants, prohibiting them from thriving. It is also difficult and expensive to remove.
- Be sure to water all newly planted plants frequently during the first year of growth. Take care not to overwater and drown shrubs and perennials.

### Perennials/Lawns



- When planting perennials be sure that the tree is planted at the same depth which it was planted in its pot. Always check soil moisture levels by touch before watering. Most perennial fatalities occur from over watering.
- Leaving mulch off of perennials during the first growing year will reduce the chances of molds and disease occurring.
- Before installing sod, be sure the ground is sufficiently tilled, or a layer of soil high in organic matter has been worked into the top layer of the ground.
- Before seeding a lawn, rake or till the surface of the ground so that the seed can easily germinate and penetrate the ground. (F)
- Keep both sod and seeded areas moist, but not wet, for several weeks after installation.

### Trees

- Plant potted trees at the same depth they are growing in so that the top of soil in the pot is level with the existing grade of your lawn. (G)
- Be sure trees are planted level. If necessary, temporarily stake trees.
- Balled and Burlap trees and shrubs should be planted so that the top of the burlap is even with the elevation of the grade.
- The top portion of the Burlap on B&B plant materials should be removed and discarded.
- Be sure that soil at the bottom of planting pits does not hold water. If necessary, dig around in the bottom of the pits and loosen soil, or add granular material and mix it into the bottom of the planting pit.

# Notes on Selecting a Contractor

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Notes on selecting a Contractor

These notes are taken from the pamphlet “Hiring a Contractor in Minneapolis” distributed by;

Department of Regulatory Services  
Licenses and Consumer Services  
350 South 5th Street, Room 1-C  
Minneapolis, MN. 55415  
673-3001

## **General Contractor**

- A project manager who coordinates all aspects of the job.

## **Subcontractor**

- Specializes in one or more types of building trades, such as masonry.

## **Required License**

- In the City of Minneapolis, a building contractors license is required to work on all single-family, two-family or tri-family residences. The Department of Inspections will not issue building permits to unlicensed contractors. There are two (2) classifications of building contractors who will be able to sign contracts with homeowners and obtain permits.
- Building contractors must hold either a Class “A” or Class “B” license. All general contractors must have a Class A license.
- The holder of a Class C license is an individual who performs labor only under a Class A or B license holder. A Class C contractor may not enter into contracts with homeowners nor may a Class C license holder obtain a building permit.

## **Trade License**

- Minneapolis requires the following trades to be licensed under specialty trade licenses: Tree servicing, Sign hanging, Oil burner installation, Gas fitters, Plaster/stucco, Plumber, Steam and hot water, Heating, A/C and ventilating installing, Electrical, Building wrecking, Masonry/bricks, concrete, blocks, etc., Electrical and Cement finishing.

# Notes on Selecting a Contractor

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## **Project Research**

- Know your project. Before you can decide who to hire you must know what you are going to do and what will go into your project. Your research should cover the job you want to do, the materials to be used, and the way to install them. The more you know about the job you want done, the easier it will be for you to monitor the work and determine that it is being done correctly.

## **Choosing a Contractor**

- Make sure the contractor is licensed and bonded through the City of Minneapolis.
- Get a list of references.
- Take a look at their past projects.
- Visit a project of theirs currently under construction.

## **Check the Contractors Record**

- Call the Division of Licenses and Consumer Services at 673-3001. They will give you the records of the contractor including any history of permit violations or consumer complaints.
- Call the Better Business Bureau at 699-1111. They will provide you with information on complaints they have received about the contractor.
- Call the Minnesota Department of Commerce at 296-6319. They are responsible for licensing contractors working outside of Minneapolis and St. Paul.
- Trust your intuition, do not hire someone you are uncomfortable around.

## **Bidding**

- Prepare a plan and written description of the work. This is called a specification list. Be sure to include any specific materials or extras you will require. A specifications list is used to ensure that all contractors you request bids from are bidding on the same project.
- Always get three (3) bids. Do not discuss the amount of money you have or are willing to pay.
- When you get all the bids, make sure they have everything you want and no unwanted extras.

# Notes on Selecting a Contractor

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## **Contracts**

- Minneapolis ordinance 277-3090 requires all home improvements contracts be in writing and contain the following minimum items:
  - The date on which the contract was signed,
  - The homeowner's name and address,
  - The contractors name, business address, and telephone number,
  - The total cost of the contract including materials, labor and sales,
  - The date the work will be started and the date on which it will be substantially completed. Weather conditions should be taken into account,
  - Signatures of both parties.
- Do not accept a verbal contract.

## **Change Order Clause**

- A change order clause in the contract prevents additions or changes without both the homeowner's and contractor's signatures. When changes do arise, make sure they are specified as clearly as in the original contract.

## **Specifications**

- Describe the specifications in great detail. If you do not, you and your contractor may misunderstand each other and problems could develop. When applicable, specify type of material, brand name, size, color, grades, styles, quality markings, and model numbers.
- Specify the exact location where materials should be installed and if necessary, how they should be finished. Specify that all work must comply with applicable codes. All costs of materials and labor should be detailed exactly.
- Remember that anything left out of the contract becomes extra and you will have to pay for it over and above the contract amount.

## **Schedule of Payments**

- Reputable contractors do not ask for large down payments and you should refuse to pay one. Down payments are negotiable, ten percent is a good choice.
- If you decide to schedule partial payments throughout the job, the payments should never pay for more than the amount of work already completed.
- A final payment should be scheduled for sometime after the work is completed, this is to determine if the work is satisfactory before paying for it.

# Notes on Selecting a Contractor

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## **Liability Insurance and Bonding**

- Minneapolis requires all contractors to be bonded. A bond is a sum of money, available through a surety company, that is used to ensure the terms of the contract are met.

## **Guarantees and Warranties**

- Minnesota state law provides for a mandatory one year warranty on all home improvement projects.
- You may also want the contractor to write in all warranties covered by the manufacturers on products they intend to use.

## **Cancellation Rights**

- The Federal Truth in Lending Act and Minnesota Law allow a three-day cooling off period after signing certain types of home improvement contracts - those in which payment is scheduled for five or more installments or if interest will be charged.
- If you decide to cancel the contract, you must notify the contractor, preferably in writing, within that three-day period. Any down payment or other charges already paid must be returned to you.

## **Subcontractors**

- Have the general contractor list all subcontractors in the contract or in writing before the work is to begin. This will assist you in checking into parties who could have potential liens against your property.

## **Cleanup**

- Be specific about who is going to clean up and haul away debris from the job site. To avoid having a pile of trash left behind, the contract should clearly state that the contractor will remove all debris and leave the project in “broom clean condition”.

## **Permits**

- The City of Minneapolis requires building permits to be obtained for all work above \$500 or all work of any value if it involves a structural change. Several exceptions to this rule exist, but, to be sure, call the Permit Counter at 673-5890.
- Minneapolis ordinance does not allow the contractor to work under a permit obtained by the homeowner. Homeowners in Minneapolis are required to sign a statement that they are performing their own work and a contractor is not performing the work.
- If the contractor asks you to obtain a permit, refuse.
- Permits are required to ensure that the work performed meet all applicable and current codes under the Uniform Building Code.

# Notes on Selecting a Contractor

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## **Liens**

- Every person or company that has furnished work or provided material to build or improve your property is entitled to a mechanics lien on the property. This means that the contractor and any subcontractor or material supplier for a building project can go to court and try to take possession of your property if they are not paid.
- A contractor must have a license in order to file a mechanics lien,
- A contractor must give you written notice of an intent to file a lien in the event they are not paid,
- Subcontractors must also give you notice of their right to lien your property if they are not paid by the general contractor,
- Before you pay the general contractor, get a lien waiver from all subcontractors who performed work at your property,
- If you pay the general contractor before getting notice from the subcontractor, you only have to pay once,
- A lien is filed with the county recorder and a copy delivered to you either personally or by certified mail, within 120 days after the last material or labor is furnished for the job.
- Liens are complicated. If you find yourself in a situation where a lien is filed, it may be a good idea to seek legal advice.

## **Problem Solving**

- Try to work out the problem with your contractor. Put your complaint to the contractor in writing.
- If your contractor refuses to address the complaint, call the Inspections Department at 673-5800 to find out if a final inspection has been made by the Building Inspector.
- Consider using a Mediation service for disputes that continue more than one week.
- The Division of Licenses and Consumer Services (673-3001) is available to assist you with any problems that can occur on your project.
- If the contractor takes your down payment and does not return, contact the Minneapolis Police Department (348-9392).
- You can sue the contractor through the court system.

Remember that most problems can be averted by being very specific about your materials, time-lines and the work to be performed. Do watch your project while it is in progress and ask questions. If you are uncomfortable with the work you see, ask for advice from some of the resources listed above.



