

THE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS: THIS IS US

Current homeowners may take for granted, and future residents may not be aware of the original philosophy of The Settings to be a neighborhood which fits into the mountain-side where homes appear to be part of the natural surroundings. These mountains were here well before us, and we, as relative newcomers, strive to protect and extend the surroundings by careful stewardship of the environment. This is also why The Settings has a 115 acre conservation preserve.

The original vision is endorsed today by the Board of Directors, the Design Review Board, and by many current and future residents. It is also consistent with the Black Mountain-Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce philosophy of “Blending Your Home Into Our Mountain Community” which states:

“Design the site to minimize the removal of existing trees and greenery. Plan for runoff controls to prevent erosion. Minimize excessive artificial light. Plant native trees and shrubbery to enhance the natural look of your home.”

So we bring to your attention three key points contained in the Design/Build Guidelines:

Maximize protection of trees

Minimize the use of exterior lighting

Design for erosion control in your landscaping plans



Why, you may ask?

The mountain-side that we call home is made up of a wide variety of beautiful trees. The vision is to protect these as much as possible while also being practical about homes occupying the same space. Homes should be designed to hug the landscape and look as if it has grown out of the site. Homes should also take advantage of the surrounding trees and incorporate them into the overall design rather than removing them. Large swaths of trees that are clear cut create bald spots on the mountain-side which are unnatural and may be seen from miles away. We also need to properly design the site for stormwater runoff and to protect against erosion. Both of these elements are key aspects of a proper landscape plan which can sometimes be forgotten while designing the home itself. SEE THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STANDARDS, SECTION III FOR LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING TREE AND VEGETATION REMOVAL RULES"

Lighting is also a very important factor in striving to fit into the natural surroundings. While certain exterior lights are needed for safety and security, the goal is to minimize exterior lighting where possible. We are all proud of our neighborhood and of our individual homes, but exterior lighting for purely aesthetic purposes should be minimized. In particular, up-lighting is undesirable. Part of our neighborhood goal is to be both good neighbors to the surrounding community and good neighbors to each other by avoiding unnecessary light shining on homes, trees, and streets around you. This is even more important during the months following leaf season.

Folks moving here from a city environment may be surprised by how dark it can be at night, especially without street lights. But that's who we are. We want to live in our surroundings with as little impact as possible and do not want to be seen at night from miles away. Therefore, many aspects of exterior lighting become important – Quantity, Placement/Direction, Intensity, Timing. SEE THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STANDARDS, SECTION II.D.7. FOR EXTERIOR LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS.

So whether you already have a home here, or are in the process of designing or building one, or are considering purchasing a lot, please respect our philosophy of unobtrusively fitting into the natural mountain-side surroundings.



In closing, we'll leave you with a quote from Frank Lloyd Wright:

"No house should ever be on a hill or on anything. It should be *of* the hill. Belonging to it. Hill and house should live together each the happier for the other."