

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

These are not part of the Zoning Bylaws.

[A copy of these Guidelines shall be given to all: a) persons applying for a subdivision; b) purchasers of lots and their architects; c) persons applying for a building permit.]

Historical Background

Chilmark is the most geologically complex section of Martha's Vineyard, due to the intermingling of the three latest terminal moraines which, with the relatively small section of the outwash plain (on the South shore), provide the town with its natural assets of physical beauty, variety of landscapes, irregular terrain, hills, ponds and shorelines.

A. Purpose of these Guidelines

To minimize the impact of all development in Chilmark to protect the Town's rural, scenic and natural qualities and adhere to the goals of Chilmark's Master Plan, Open Space Plan and Zoning By-Laws.

B. Preservation of Open Space

1. Preserve sufficient open space so that the uninhabited areas of the town are predominate.
2. Protect natural features of the landscape such as scenic points, water courses, large trees, historic spots and similar community assets.
3. Protect agricultural land and uses.
4. Retain existing woodland areas large enough to be sanctuaries for wildlife. Retain existing trails; create new ones.
5. Do not disturb wetlands; check with the Conservation Commission before doing any work near wetlands and coastal areas. Do not use pesticides or herbicides in these areas.
6. Avoid altering the natural landscape. Minimize the size of lawns and recreational facilities. (Chemical pesticides and fertilizers are not allowed in some areas. Organic products are permissible.)
7. Use native species for landscaping; retain natural vegetation on slopes.
8. Use flexible siting (Article 6.7 of the Chilmark Zoning By-Laws) to provide dedicated open space.

C. Roads and Driveways

1. Minimize grading. Build roads that curve to fit the landscape and that require slow speeds. Add speed bumps where necessary.
2. Retain natural buffer areas to screen structures and parking areas from roads, water bodies and neighboring houses.
3. Provide shared driveway entrances where possible.
4. For details of road construction refer to Appendix C of the Planning Board Rules and Regulations.

D. Siting and Design of Structures

1. Maintain the visual integrity of ridge lines and hilltops by keeping roof-tops and other construction below the ridge line and at least 10 feet below the average height of the existing trees on wooded ridges or hilltops.
2. Grading and earth removal should be executed so that contours of the land are the same as those previously existing on the site and adjacent to it.
3. In open land, site houses behind fields against the background of adjoining woodlands.
4. Site all structures to minimize visibility from roads, water bodies, and neighboring properties. Take care not to block neighbors' views.
5. Design structures that harmonize with the landscape and are compatible with the scale and character of existing Chilmark architecture.
6. Use materials, textures and colors which are typical of Chilmark's architectural traditions.
7. Place all wiring and appurtenances of electric power, communications and fire alarm systems underground.
8. Preserve visibility of the night sky by shielding all external lights (see Article 5 in Zoning Bylaws).