

# Oakmore Homes Association

## Frequently Asked Questions

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The Oakmore Homes Association (OHA) has prepared this list of responses to the most frequently asked questions (FAQ's) about the Association. These help explain the benefits of membership and address concerns that some people have about committing to the neighborhood organization. We recommend that interested parties read the full text of the CC&R's and ByLaws for more complete information and contact us with any additional questions.

### What is the Oakmore Homes Association?

As described in our mission statement: ***The Oakmore Homes Association is a community of Oakmore neighbors committed to promoting and enhancing safety, beautification, community and property values in our neighborhood.***

The Oakmore Homes Association is one of the oldest homeowners' organizations in California . Established in 1926, we currently have over 220 member homes. By acting together, we add clout to neighborhood concerns and ensure that the interests and needs of Oakmore are heard by the City of Oakland . Our ability to realize civic improvements in the neighborhood grows in proportion to our enrolled membership. Active participation of members gives Oakmore its special vitality, which increase the value of the homes and the pleasure of living here. The OHA also publishes newsletters, brochures and a website focused on issues relevant to our neighborhood and sponsors community events like public "issue" meetings, and historic house tours.

### We live in Oakmore, why are we not already in the Association?

The boundaries of Oakmore are quite specific and only houses within those boundaries are eligible for membership. When Walter H. Leimert developed the Oakmore subdivision in the 1920's he created the Oakmore Homes Association and automatically included all of the 440 building lots in the development. Unfortunately, in 1987 a court decision nullified the voting method that the OHA used when the membership elected to extend the life of the OHA and the CC&R's. Some of the homes voted with only one of the owners' signatures when all Owners signatures were actually required. So because of a voting technicality, the original, mandatory association expired. Today we have a voluntary association that only includes Oakmore residents who have made the choice to re-join.

### Why should we join the OHA?

We are more effective when we have more members and more active participation by our member households. The Association has been very successful at maintaining the special qualities of Oakmore. This neighborhood has been an area of highly appreciated and very pleasant homes for almost 80 years. People who have just purchased here realize that the homes in Oakmore reflect a higher level of attention to architecture, craftsmanship, and charm which justifies their high valuation. Those who have lived here for awhile know that is also simply a great neighborhood. They realize that the intangible qualities of neighborliness, comfort and delight make Oakmore a wonderful place to live. These qualities are the result of our association's history and diligence. The OHA is constantly working to maintain and improve these qualities. We can do it better with your help

### How much does the OHA membership cost?

Annual Dues are currently \$75.00 per year. The maximum allowable dues are \$100 per year unless the membership votes to increase it.

## What do the CC&R's (Conditions Covenants & Restrictions) control?

The CC&R's of our Association represent the basic charter of the OHA and govern every member household. In the most general sense, they are a set of expectations we have of each other. They are intended to help preserve the spirit of our community and thereby protect the quality of our neighborhood and the value of our homes. The CC&R's regulate lot usage, construction and minimum standards for the care and maintenance of property in Oakmore.

## Why should I agree to be bound by the CC&R's?

The easiest answer to this is that if you like the way Oakmore is, you should support this essential element of its history and excellence so that we can continue along the same path of quality. It's not perfect here but it is quite special and that was not an accident. It took foresight from the Leimert Company and diligence from the neighbors and the OHA since 1926. Without your commitment this work becomes much harder and the neighborhood ultimately fragments and suffers. Each of your 220 neighbors who have already agreed to re-join the association and be bound by the CC&R's realize that the benefits of the CC&R's far outweigh the restrictions. CC&R's encourage responsible property improvement and maintenance. They promote communication and negotiation between neighbors. The CC&R's are positive guidelines to be promoted for your benefit as well as your neighbors'.

## What do the ByLaws control?

The Bylaws of our Association are the rules governing the internal operations of the OHA: a set of procedures that detail how meetings of the Board of Directors and of Members are to be held and the duties and authority of the Association's agents. They enable our Association to fairly reflect our community and work with our members to further the mission of the OHA.

## Who runs the Association?

The OHA is managed by an all volunteer group of neighbors who donate their time, energy and vision to Oakmore. There is a five member Board of Directors which is elected annually. We have committees which focus on particular topics like utility undergrounding, the public stairway project, holiday decorations, etc. Any member can become involved through the committee process and eventually run for election to the board. The OHA belongs to all of the members and its governance is a reflection of those who take the time to volunteer and become involved. In other words...you're in charge if you are committed to being so.

## Doesn't the City already regulate safety, blight, new construction, etc?

Yes, the City of Oakland has many ordinances and enforcement practices in place. In fact, the construction design review aspects of our CC&R's are almost moot now because the City's own design review policy is catching up and institutionalizing the same kind of architectural design guidelines that the Leimert Company was promoting in 1926. Oakland also has blight ordinances, tree protection ordinances, view corridor protection and safety regulations that often exceed those in our CC&R's. That is why the OHA sees its modern day role as primarily one of communication, facilitation and mediation among neighbors.

## What constitutes blight?

This is really a City of Oakland defined issue. Generally it has to do with debris, non functional automobiles, or trash in the public view or the public right of way. Contact the City for a more specific definition.

## What about construction projects?

Construction, architectural design and site planning issues are a serious concern in all neighborhoods. New construction involves change and change usually triggers at least a few adverse reactions. Good planning and good design helps us all live together in a considerate and healthy manner in the City. The

CC&R's establish standards for all new and replacement structures, including fences. The purpose of the standards is to ensure quality and harmony in the neighborhood, rather than to dictate style or taste. The CC&R's also limit subdivision of lots, setbacks and land uses. However, as mentioned above, most of the construction review aspects of our CC&R's are becoming moot because the City's own design review policy is catching up and institutionalizing similar guidelines to those the Leimert Company was promoting in 1926. Additionally, individual property owners have become more educated on the impacts of design and construction. Therefore, the OHA is currently focused on encouraging neighbors to communicate early and frequently in the construction process, in order to avoid conflict and surprise.

### Why didn't the Association "do something about..."?

We can not be everywhere (unless of course everyone signs up!) so we inevitably miss some neighborhood problems. Unfortunately there are problems that might have been "nipped in the bud" with an early and friendly reminder from the OHA, but we did not learn of these until it was too late. Additionally, we are not the police or the government. Our power is limited. However the more members we have and the more eyes and ears on the street that we have, the more effective we can be in preventing neighborhood problems in the future.

### Why should I let my neighbors or the homes association "tell me what to do"?

None of us like to be told what to do. Fortunately most of us also realize that if everybody did whatever they wanted, the neighborhood would be a chaotic and unappealing place to live. So this boils down to the agreement we all make with each other so that we can live together fruitfully. The answer we often give to this question is "put yourself in the other person's shoes". How would you like living next to the (trash, barking dog, construction, noise, etc) that you are proposing? Is there a more reasonable and considerate way to pursue your own happiness without taking away someone else's?

### Can we leave the Association?

By its nature, membership in the Association binds the property permanently. Stability of membership is crucial, so once you sign your house up, you can not remove it. Successive owners will automatically be in the Association. The strength of the OHA comes from committing the homes and the land to remain in and respect the neighborhood association. This is how a homeowners association maintains quality and neighborly commitment from owner to successive owner. It gives a reassuring longevity to the status of the real property and increases the value of the Association and its member houses. A comparable example of this is the Lakeshore Highlands neighborhood, where the Leimert Company also instituted a permanent homeowners' association. Some people are initially uncomfortable with this permanence so we remind them that they are simply putting the property back into the association it used to belong to automatically. The current CC&R's renew automatically every 20 years unless three-fourths of the membership votes to stop the process.

### Why do we have to sign the addendum?

To join the OHA all legal owners of the property must sign an addendum binding the property title and deed to the terms of the CC&R's and the ByLaws. Like any legal obligation on your property, it should be carefully read and understood, then signed and notarized.

### What do we do next?

Please contact us for more information. We encourage you to ask questions and find out more reasons to join. One of our Directors would be happy to speak with you personally. If you have already joined us, then we look forward to your involvement. Our association Board of Directors meets every month and all are welcome to attend. We rely on the volunteer efforts of neighbors to achieve our goals and we invite members to help us establish those goals.

## Where can we get more information on the OHA?

Our website has more information about the OHA and our community activities, as well as interesting segments on the history of Oakmore. You can view and print the full text of the CC&R's and the ByLaws from this website or you can contact the OHA and request a copy. Members may also request copies of past Board Meeting Minutes, Financial Disclosures and Assessment Policies. We are a transparent, non-profit corporation and we belong to the membership.

Please call or email us with any questions you may have. [oakmorehomes@yahoo.com](mailto:oakmorehomes@yahoo.com) | 510.530.4719

**Sincerely,**

**The Board of Directors for the Oakmore Homes Association**