**SoMa Homeowners’ Association**

**Restrictions on Items Displayed Outside and In Unit Windows and**

**Modifications to Unit Exteriors**

All SoMa homeowners, when taking title to their unit, agreed to comply with the provisions in the SoMa Declaration of Covenants and the rules and regulations of the Board of Directors of the SoMa Homeowners’ Association. SoMa homeowners who rent their units have the responsibility to educate their tenants about restrictions in the Declaration of Covenants and the Board’s rules and regulations. This summary highlights many, but not all, of the restrictions concerning (1) items displayed outside and in unit windows and (2) additions, changes or alterations to a SoMa rowhouse.

**General Principles**

--Maintaining the uniform appearance of unit exteriors and uncluttered entrance areas helps protect property values for all SoMa homeowners.

--Entrance areas to all units are common areas owned by all SoMa homeowners. Accordingly, all homeowners have an interest in items residents display at unit entrances.

--Yard art rules balance a desire for individual self-expression and the need to maintain an appealing exterior appearance throughout SoMa. Yard art in SoMa is primarily for the owner’s enjoyment and should be unobtrusive to the general SoMa community.

--Maintaining the beauty of the natural landscaping of SoMa is a priority for homeowners and therefore personal items permanently displayed at the entrances of units should contribute to SoMa’s natural landscaping.

--Restrictions should be clear, simple and self-executing; the Homeowners Association does not favor standards that are difficult and time-consuming to administer and require prejudging the appropriateness of individual displayed items.

**Permitted Items: Yard Art, Potted Plants and Door Wreaths**

Yard art is limited to one piece located immediately adjacent to your front door. Yard art should be discreet and understated to avoid unnecessarily drawing the attention of your neighbors. Yard art must be maintained in good condition and constructed of metal, glass, ceramic, wood or stone.

Yard art is a decorative item of any description placed outside the ground floor of a SoMa rowhouse, including statuary, sculpture, iron works, bird feeders, figurines, urns, baskets and decorative rocks.

The substantial variation in front entrance design at SoMa does not lend itself to strict limits on the size of yard art. An owner who wants to decorate with one piece of yard art is expected to limit the size so that placement fits comfortably next to the front entrance in a manner that is not obtrusive to neighbors.

A resident may also place up to three (3) planted pots at a rowhouse entrance. Pots must be in good condition and may be displayed on the ground or on shepherd’s hooks. Each pot must be no more than 15” in any dimension and in good condition. Planted pots may only be placed in mulched areas of the landscape and placement must not interfere with lawn mowing, edging, trimming or other landscape maintenance. Pots must be weeded, and diseased, dying or dead plants must be promptly removed. Unplanted pots should be promptly removed and stored inside the unit.

Yard art and pots should be in colors that compliment the overall appearance of the row house and not distract from it in a way that draws excessive attention to the object. Preferred colors are natural stone, gray, white, taupe, terra cotta, or earth tone. Yard art and pots should not have colors or color combinations considered excessively bright, garish, jarring, or overly reflective.

Wreaths in good condition may be hung on front doors.

While no application for approval is required for yard art, potted plants and door wreaths, the final judgment of whether an owner’s selection is permitted rests solely with the Architectural Control Committee. An owner may appeal an unfavorable decision by the Architectural Control Committee to the Board of Directors of the SoMa Homeowner’s Association

**Holiday Decorations Displayed Outside and in Unit Windows**

Holiday decorations in good condition, including decorative lighting, may be displayed in unit windows and outside but are restricted to a period of time around the holidays they represent. Thanksgiving through Christmas being the most widely decorated time of the year, holiday displays are limited to November 15 through January 15.  Holiday décor for other traditional times of celebration, such as St. Patrick’s Day and Easter, are limited to two weeks prior to, and one week following, the holiday.

The most important standards related to holiday decor are period of time on display (not too long), tasteful (not too large or commercial) and few in number.

**Athletic Team, Ethnic, Cultural, Religious, Political and other Message Displays Prohibited Outside or in Windows; Offensive Displays Prohibited**

Personal item of any description that feature an athletic team, ethnic, cultural, religious or political theme or otherwise seek to convey a message are prohibited outside or in unit windows. Display items of any description that are potentially offensive or seek to convey a potentially offensive message are prohibited outside or in unit windows.

**Trash/Recycling Bins**

All trash and recycling bins for rowhouse units must be stored in unit garages and may be placed outside anytime after 5:00 p.m. the day before pickup.All trash must be placed in closed plastic bags and deposited in closed trash bins. Bins should be put back in garages by 6 p.m. on the day of pickup. Recycled material should be placed in recycling bins and loose items weighted down. Glass is not accepted for recycling.

Other than as permitted in the previous paragraph, the Declaration prohibits trash receptacles of any description, including receptacles for pet waste, to be placed outside a unit. Residents are not permitted to otherwise leave bagged pet waste anywhere outside of units, including but not limited to, the areas around unit entrances.

**Exterior Speakers**

The Declaration prohibits speakers from being installed anywhere on the exterior of units, including on roof decks and balconies. Residents may not use speakers installed in violation of the Declaration and homeowners are requested to remove them.

The Declaration also does not permit recessed speakers to be installed in the common walls or common ceilings of units.

**Structures**

The Declaration prohibits structures of any description on roof decks and balconies. “Structures” include hot tubs, saunas, storage, sheds, greenhouses and tents.

**Landscaping and Balcony Planters**

The Declaration requires the Homeowners Association to maintain all SoMa outdoor landscaping, regardless of location or property lines. Landscaping includes lawn, shrubs, rocks, mulch, trees and plants of any description, and also includes landscaping around rowhouse entrances. Potted plants on roof decks or balconies are not considered to be landscaping and are otherwise permitted. Potted plants displayed by a resident outside rowhouse entrances are not considered to be landscaping and must be maintained by the resident.

Homeowners are encouraged to plant and maintain their balcony planters in good condition during the growing season. At a minimum, residents are required to weed balcony planters and promptly remove diseased, dying or dead plants.

**Flags**

Our national flag may be flown on national holidays. Flags of any other description may not be displayed outside a unit or in unit windows.

**Signs**

Signs, banners, billboards and other displays or advertising are prohibited outside or in unit windows. Security company signs are prohibited with the exception of one decal affixed to your front door. One “For Sale” sign no larger than six (6) square feet may be placed in a unit’s window. The recipient of the Garden Committee’s best planter award may display the related sign outside their residence.

**Additions, Changes and Alterations to Unit Exteriors**

No additions, changes or alterations may be made to a unit exterior without the approval of the Board or the Architectural Control Committee. Exterior additions, changes and alterations include, but are not limited to: Window tinting, exterior lighting (including accent or other exterior lighting on roof decks and balconies), vent placement and replacement of any exterior feature such as siding, roofing, windows, doors, lighting fixture and decking. Application for all such additions, changes and alterations should be made in writing to the Architectural Control Committee on forms that will be provided by the Committee. To obtain a form to make application to the Architectural Control Committee contact P.J. Morgan Real Estate at 402-397-7775.