# **City of Alexandria, Virginia**

#### **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 25, 2015

# **TO:**CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE<br/>PARKER-GRAY DISTRICT BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

**FROM:** BAR STAFF

**SUBJECT:** DRAFT PARKER-GRAY DESIGN GUIDELINES

At the October 22, 2014 Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review hearing, the Board unanimously voted to defer discussion of the proposed revisions to the Parker-Gray Design Guidelines. Attached are the three draft Parker-Gray Design Guidelines chapters previously deferred: mechanical equipment, doors, and stoops and steps. In an effort to streamline the Design Guidelines, staff combined the contents of the chapters on HVAC Systems, Electrical & Gas Service, and Solar Collectors; as well as addressed small dish antennas, generators, and heat pumps in the chapter on mechanical equipment. Likewise, stoops, steps, and railings have been presented as one chapter. Staff looks forward to your feedback on the chapters and asks that you comment on the following:

- 1. Do the descriptive paragraphs sufficiently summarize the chapter for a homeowner, contractor, and architect?
- 2. What items would you add to the "do" and "don't" lists? Are there any that should be removed?
- 3. What alternate photographs, if any, do you think would better illustrate appropriate and inappropriate interventions?
- 4. Do you feel that the items in the mechanical equipment chapter should be broken out into separate chapters, or are you comfortable with all items under one chapter as shown?

#### **Replacement Siding Clarification**

At the May 21, 2014 Parker-Gray BAR hearing, the Board reviewed and provided general feedback on the draft Design Guidelines chapter on siding. At that time, it was staff's understanding that the Parker-Gray Ad Hoc Design Guidelines Workgroup had recommended - and the Board subsequently approved - a policy that permitted BAR staff to administratively approve replacement fiber cement siding in a beveled clapboard profile on the sides and rear of early buildings where historic siding no longer exists or is deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, *regardless of the historic, original siding profile*. This meant that if historic German profile siding was beyond reasonable repair on the side or rear of a house, staff could administratively approve either an in-kind replacement with wood or a fiber cement beveled clapboard.

This final policy evolved from the work group's initial finding that any replacement siding on the side and rear should match the historic original siding profile. Unfortunately, the major manufacturers of fiber cement siding, such as James Hardie, do not make <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" thick siding in any of the novelty siding profiles, including the German or Dutch lap profile widely used in Old Town. German siding is frequently seen on the front and occasionally seen on the sides of houses in Old Town, though the simpler and less expensive clapboard was also often used historically on the sides and rear. For this reason, as noted above, the present policy allows fiber cement clapboard siding to be used on the sides and rear regardless of whether it was the original siding pattern on that house.

It has recently since come to staff's attention that there is now a new high quality siding product available from Boral that is available in a <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" thick German lap profile that is made of fly ash, polyurethane, and fiberglass. Staff believes that this product meets the criteria of the Modern and Sustainable Policies, adopted by the BAR, as it is solid through the core, millable, and paintable.

Going forward, staff recommends that the Board consider a revision to the siding guidelines which would require the use of replacement siding in the historically appropriate *profile*, regardless of the material. This would allow homeowners replacing original German siding on the sides and rear of their homes an option to choose between in-kind wood replacement or any other solid, millable and paintable synthetic product, such as Boral's, provided that the German profile is maintained. To staff's knowledge, Boral is the only company manufacturing high quality composite siding in the German profile at the present time, although the siding industry is ever changing and other similar products may be available in the future.

Keep in mind that this would mean that for those houses with a German profile siding on the sides, owners would have a choice between two high-priced replacement items: high quality wood (which could be natural wood or treated wood, such as Design Pine or Prime Lock) or Boral. Alternatively, although it's not recommended, homeowners could use a lower quality and less expensive yellow pine. At the present time the cost of the Boral siding is comparable to cedar wood siding.

Lastly, staff also asks the Board to clarify in instances where a homeowner is replacing only the siding on the sides or rear of an early home and historic siding exists that is salvageable, must they retain the historic siding or are they permitted to use a composite product with staff approval?

Staff, therefore asks the Board to clarify:

- 1. On the sides and rear of early building, must original wood siding that is reasonably repairable be retained or may it be replaced with synthetic siding?
- 2. On the sides and rear of any residential building, must replacement siding match the historic and original profile or may it be any historically appropriate profile?

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1- DRAFT Design Guidelines: Mechanical Equipment
- 2- DRAFT Design Guidelines: Doors
- 3- DRAFT Design Guidelines: Stoops & Steps
- 4- DRAFT Design Guidelines: Siding
- 5- Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide

# Mechanical Equipment



APPROVAL MATRIX					
YEAR BUILT	FRONT (STREET FACING)	SIDE (NON-STREET FACING)	REAR (NON-STREET FACING)		
Pre - 1932	STAFF REVIEW	NO REVIEW	NO REVIEW		
Post - 1931	STAFF REVIEW	NO REVIEW	NO REVIEW		

## ROOFTOP EQUIPMENT

The Zoning Ordinance requires screening of rooftop mechanical equipment throughout the city. Regardless of the age of a building, staff reviews all rooftop equipment and screening to determine whether it is visibile from a public way. Any equipment or screening that is visible from a public way requires BAR staff approval. In instances where screening is more visually obtrusive than the equipment itself, staff may administratively approve a waiver of rooftop screening.

Mechanical equipment including HVAC units, generators, solar collectors, small dish antennas, gas meters, and electrical panels are an important and practical element of modern living that can have an important effect on the overall visual composition of a building. If not appropriately located, such equipment can create a visual disruption of the skyline or building design. To the extent possible, mechanical equipment should be hidden from view, either ground mounted in rear and side yards; or on a flat roof and set back at least 15 feet from the building face. Staff reviews all mechanical equipment and screening to determine whether it is visible from a public way, with the exception of ground-mounted equipment located in the side or rear yards or on the side and rear of a building. Any visible equipment and screening located on the roof or front of a building, regardless of age, requires BAR staff approval.

## GUIDELINES

DO . . .

- Locate equipment in the least visible location.
- Screen visible ground mounted equipment.
- Locate rooftop units at least 15 feet from the street facing facade.
- Ensure that the roof structure can support the additional weight and vibration of rooftop mechanical equipment.
- Remove equipment that is no longer in use.
- Install small dish antennas at least 10 feet back from the front building face.
- Paint wall-mounted equipment to match the adjacent wall surface.

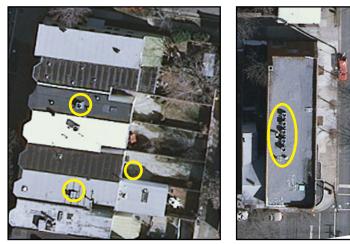
## DON'T . . .

- Locate ground-mounted HVAC in the front yard without BAR staff approval.
- Use vinyl materials as screening.

#### REGARDLESS OF AGE OR LOCATION:

\* All projects must comply with the zoning ordinance and building code requirements; a building permit may be required.

## EXAMPLES



The rooftop HVAC units are strategically placed in the center of a flat roof or in the yard behind fences, to limit visibility from the street.



**X** The lattice screening is bulkier and more visually obtrusive than the mechanical equipment itself.



Solar panels should be strategically placed in a location that is least visible from a public street or park.



The wall-mounted equipment should be located on a non-street facing building wall and must be painted to match the adjacent wall surface.

## SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST

- A survey plat or aerial image with the location of the new equipment clearly indicated.
- If wall-mounted equipment, a photograph of the building face showing where the unit will be located.
- Specifications and dimensions for the units, including any necessary platforms or risers.
- If screening is proposed, specify the material, dimensions, and design.

# DOORS



APPROVAL MATRIX					
YEAR BUILT	FRONT (STREET FACING)	SIDE (NON-STREET FACING)	REAR (NON-STREET FACING)		
Pre - 1932	STAFF REVIEW	NO REVIEW	NO REVIEW		
Post - 1931	NO REVIEW	NO REVIEW	NO REVIEW		

Exterior doors on the street-facing elevation of pre-1932 buildings must be of an appropriate style and material as they are a character defining feature of any building. Staff will evaluate existing doors, frame, trim, and the transom to determine its authenticity. If no historic material is present, then staff will administratively approve a replacement door in the appropriate style and material. Storm doors do not require approval. Security bars are strongly discouraged on street-facing elevations and require BAR staff review on street-facing elevations.



## SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST

- Photograph of door to be replaced.
- Specifications for replacement door (material and design).
- Indicate if the threshold, frame, trim, and/or transom will be replaced.

# GUIDELINES

## DO . . .

- Use clear and non reflective glass where appropriate.
- Preserve and restore historic doors, transoms, trim, frames, and hardware.

## GARAGE DOORS

- Replacement of garage doors on pre-1932 buildings that face a public street require staff review.
- Original side-hinged or sliding wood doors and hardware on early garages must be retained and repaired.
- Overhead garage doors on buildings constructed after 1931 can be replaced with high-quality pressed steel or composite materials.

## DON'T . . .

- Use pressed steel or vinyl.
- Install ornate stained glass on a vernacular building.

# STOOPS & STEPS CITY OF ALEXANDER PARKER-GRAY DISTR

APPROVAL MATRIX					
YEAR BUILT	FRONT (STREET FACING)	SIDE (NON-STREET FACING)	REAR (NON-STREET FACING)		
Pre - 1932	STAFF REVIEW	NO REVIEW	NO REVIEW		
Post - 1931	NO REVIEW	NO REVIEW	NO REVIEW		

Stoops, steps, and railings provide the transition area between the public street and the private interior of a home and are an integral part of the overall composition of a building. Many historic structures have stoops, steps, and railings that were added later and may or may not have acquired historic significance. For this reason, historic stoops, steps, and railings, as determined by staff, must be retained on the street-face of early buildings. While property owners are encouraged to retain these historic features if present on the other elevations, no BAR approvals are required for their replacement.



## RAILINGS

PARKER-GRAY DISTRICT

- Must be minimally visible and constructed of post and rail (no balusters or pickets).
- Guardrails required by the building code on the street-facing elevation of early buildings require BAR staff approval.

## SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST

- A plat showing the location of the proposed stoop or steps.
- A photograph of the existing conditions.
- Measured drawings and specs for the replacement items.

# GUIDELINES

### DO . . .

- Choose designs that are appropriate to the style of the structure. Staff can assist you if you are unsure.
- · Choose appropriate materials such as wood, cast iron, pre-cast concrete, or stone.
- Look for historic photographs to help inform the type of design that is appropriate.

### DON'T . . .

- Remove or obscure historic features of the building.
- Use suburban deck style guardrails.

# SIDING&TRIM

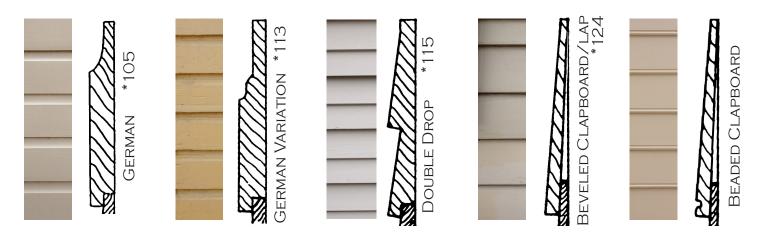


APPROVAL MATRIX					
YEAR BUILT	FRONT (STREET FACING)	SIDE (NON-STREET FACING)	REAR (NON-STREET FACING)		
Pre - 1932	staff review	staff review	staff review		
Post - 1931	staff review	staff review	staff review		

Exterior siding protects a structure from the elements and is an important design element which can also provide clues to the building's age and architectural style. A central tenant of historic preservation is that original historic materials should be retained and repaired, rather than replaced. Therefore, the BAR requires retention of historic siding, if present, on buildings or additions constructed prior to 1932 ("early" buildings). For "later" buildings or for the side and rear elevations of early buildings where historic siding no longer exists, lap fiber cement can be used, provided that it has a smooth finish and is paintable. Likewise, synthetic trim can be applied in select locations, as long as it is solid through-the-core, millable, and paintable.

An informed and careful analysis of the condition of existing siding must be completed by BAR staff before any decision to replace historic materials is made. In many cases, historic siding is covered by subsequent layers of siding, such as aluminum, vinyl, and artificial stone siding and it is not unusual to discover intact historic siding in good condition underneath. Staff will make a determination whether the historic siding is salvageable and must be retained on early buildings. Maintenance of any type of siding is of essential, as regular caulking and painting is far less expensive than replacement.

# SIDING TYPES





## TIME TO REPAINT?

While the BAR does not regulate color, staff can provide you a list of historically appropriate colors as well as advice on regular maintenance and repairs.

# GUIDELINES

### DO . . .

- Repair rather than replace historic wood siding.
- Carefully remove portions of inappropriate siding to determine if historic siding exists underneath.
- Replace only those portions of siding that cannot be repaired.
- Match the appropriate historic profile.
- Paint wood siding. BAR staff can provide you a list of historically appropriate colors.

## DON'T . . .

- Use blow-in insulation that permanently adheres to the historic framing and siding.
- Install aluminum or vinyl siding.
- Capsulate siding, trim or other wood elements such as brackets, spindles, cornices, columns, etc.

REGARDLESS OF AGE OR LOCATION: A building permit is required for siding replacement over **100 square feet** in the historic districts.

# SIDING ANALYSIS



A contractor removes a small portion of the surface siding.



The investigation reveals an older layer of siding underneath.

Using clues such as the siding profile and the type of nails used, staff makes a determination on the age of the siding.





The contractor exposes more of the historic siding for staff to assess its condition. In this case, the historic siding is in very good condition and will be stripped and painted for reuse on this building.



# **Early Residential Buildings**

# **Built before 1932**

## FRONT (street facing)

#### **Demolition/Capsulation**

Demolition of 19th century fences/walls (B) Demolition of chain link and non-historic fences (S) Accessibility features when no longer needed (N)

Site elements Fences, except hollow vinyl fences, and those located in the right-of-way (S) Ground mounted HVAC (S) Decks/patios less than 2 ft. above grade (N) Freestanding (permanent) planters and retaining walls less than 2 ft. high. (N) Non-permanent yard features and art (N) Paving (N) Bollards (N)

#### Exterior finishes

Painting of, or stucco applied to, unpainted masonry (B)
Wood siding, including synthetic trim in limited locations (S)
Paint color (N)

#### **Roofs**

Dormers (B) Skylights (B) Rooftop decks (B) Replacement roofing (S) Solar panels (S) Chimneys/flues (S) Visible rooftop HVAC screening (or waiver) if located at least 15' behind the front façade on flat or sloped roofs (S)

#### **Replacement windows/doors**

Replacement SDL wood windows (if no historic windows exist or cannot be preserved), without tinted or reflective glass (S) Doors and garage doors (S) Security bars (S) Storm doors (N)

#### **Building features**

Vents/fans greater than 1 sq. ft. (B) Dish antennas over 2 feet in diameter (B) Vents/fans less than 1 sq. ft. (S) Shutters (S) Drainage features (S) Dish antennas under 2 feet in diameter (S) Utility meters (S) Awnings (S) Stoops/steps/guard & handrails (S) Light fixtures (N) Window boxes (N)

## **SIDE** (non-street facing)

#### **Demolition/Capsulation**

Demolition of 19th century fences/walls (B) Demolition of chain link and non-historic fences (N) Accessibility features when no longer needed (N)

#### Site elements

Fences, except hollow vinyl (S)
Ground mounted HVAC (N)
Decks/patios less than 2 ft. above grade (N)
Freestanding (permanent) planters and retaining walls less than 2 ft high (N)
Non-permanent yard features and art (N)
Paving (N)
Bollards (N)

#### **Exterior finishes**

Painting of, or stucco applied to, unpainted masonry (B) Siding, including fiber cement siding and synthetic trim (S) Paint color (N)

#### <u>Roofs</u>

Dormers (B) Skylights (S) Replacement roofing (S) Visible rooftop HVAC screening (or waiver) (S) Solar panels (N) Chimneys/flues (N) Rooftop decks, provided they are located at least 15' behind the front façade on flat or sloped roofs (N)

#### **Replacement windows/doors**

Replacement windows of any material but vinyl, without tinted or reflective glass (S) All doors (N) Security Bars (N)

#### **Building features**

Light fixtures (N) Vents/fans (N) Dish antennas and all mast TV antennas (N) Shutters (N) Drainage features (N) Utility meters (N) Window boxes (N) Awnings (N) Stoops/steps/guard & handrails (N)

## **REAR** (non-street facing)

#### **Demolition/Capsulation**

Demolition of 19th century fences/walls (B)
Demolition of chain link and non-historic fences (N)
Demolition and capsulation of 250 or less square feet of rear wall area, below second floor window sills (N)
Demolition and capsulation of 100 gross square feet of building area (e.g. existing one story additions) below second floor window sills and accessory structures (N)
Accessibility features when no longer needed (N)

#### Site elements

Fences, except hollow vinyl (S)
Ground mounted HVAC (N)
Decks/patios less than 2 ft. above grade (N)
Freestanding (permanent) planters and retaining walls less than 2 ft. in high (N)
Non-permanent yard features and art (N)
Paving (N)
Bollards (N)

#### Exterior finishes

Painting of, or stucco applied to, unpainted masonry (B) Siding, including fiber cement siding and synthetic trim (S) Paint color (N)

#### <u>Roofs</u>

Dormers (B) Skylights (S) Replacement roofing (S) Visible rooftop HVAC screening <u>(or waiver)</u> (S) Solar panels (N) Chimneys/flues (N) Rooftop decks, provided they are located at least 15' behind the front façade on flat or sloped roofs (N)

#### **Replacement windows/doors**

Replacement windows of any material but vinyl, without tinted or reflective glass (S) All doors (N) Security bars (N)

#### **Building features**

Light fixtures (N) Vents/fans (N) Dish antennas and all mast TV antennas (N) Shutters (N) Drainage features (N) Utility meters (N) Window boxes (N) Awnings (N) Stoops/steps/guard & handrails (N) Alterations below the second floor window sills (N)

#### New construction

Permanent planters attached to the building (B) Door hoods, porches or porticos (B) Decks and balconies (B) Accessibility features (B) Accessory structures under 50 sq. ft. for corner lots (S)

#### New construction

Permanent planters attached to the building (S) Door hoods, porches or porticos (S) Accessory structures under 50 sq. ft. for corner lots (S) Accessibility features (N)

B = BAR review required at public hearing S= Staff administrative review only N=No BAR or Staff review

#### New construction

Permanent planters attached to the building (N)
Accessory structures no greater than one story, 256 gross sq. ft. and 11.5 feet high (N)
One-story additions no more than 250 gross sq. ft. of floor area and no taller than 2nd floor window sills (N)
Decks/patios below the second floor window sills (N)
Door hoods, porches or porticos below second floor window sill (N)
Accessibility features (N)

1. Unless specifically exempted here, the BAR must approve any alterations, additions, demolition and/or capsulation.

- 2. All projects must comply with zoning ordinance and building code requirements, and a building permit may be required.
- 3. All work approved by Staff through the administrative approval process must still be consistent with all BAR Design Guidelines, as amended, and policies.

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4. Corner buildings have two street facing elevations (fronts) and two non-street facing elevations (sides).

B= BAR review at hearing. S= Staff administrative review only N=No BAR or Staff review required

# FRONT

#### **Demolition/Capsulation**

Demolition of all fences (N) Accessibility features, when no longer needed (N)

#### Site elements

Fences, except hollow vinyl fences, and those located in the right-of-way (S)
Ground mounted HVAC (S)
Decks/patios less than 2 ft. above grade (N)
Freestanding (permanent) planters and retaining walls less than 2 ft. high (N)
Non-permanent yard features and art (N)
Paving (N)
Bollards (N)

#### **Exterior finishes**

Painting of, or stucco applied to, unpainted masonry (B)Wood siding, including fiber cement siding and synthetic trim (S)Paint color (N)

#### **Roofs**

Dormers (B) Rooftop decks (B) Skylights (B) Replacement roofing (S) Visible rooftop HVAC screening (or waiver) if located at least 15' behind the front façade on flat or sloped roofs (S) Solar panels (S) Chimneys/flues (S)

#### **Replacement windows/doors**

Security bars (S)

Replacement windows (S):

If located 15' or more from the front property line they may be any material, operation or configuration, without tinted or reflective glass; and,

If located less than 15' from the property line, the windows may be wood, aluminum clad wood, or any high quality, paintable material with permanently affixed simulated divided light muntins. They may not be hollow vinyl, have sandwich muntins, or have tinted or reflective glass. Doors (N)

#### **Building features**

Dish antennas over 2 feet in diameter (B) Vents/fans greater than 1 sq. ft. (B) Drainage features (S) Vents/fans less than 1 sq. ft. (S) Utility meters (S) Dish antennas under 2 feet in diameter (S) Light fixtures (N) Shutters (N) Window boxes (N) Awnings (N) Stoops/steps/guard & handrails (N)

# Later Residential Buildings Built after 1931

# SIDE

Demolition/Capsulation Demolition of all fences (N) Accessibility features when no longer needed (N)

#### Site elements

Fences, except hollow vinyl fences (S)
Ground mounted HVAC (N)
Decks/patios less than 2 ft. above grade (N)
Freestanding (permanent) planters and retaining walls less than 2 ft. high (N)
Non-permanent yard features and art (N)
Paving (N)
Bollards (N)

#### Exterior finishes

Painting of, or stucco applied to, unpainted masonry (B) Siding, including fiber cement siding and synthetic trim (S) Paint color (N)

#### <u>Roofs</u>

Dormers (B) Replacement roofing (S) Skylights (S) Visible rooftop HVAC screening (or waiver) (S) Solar panels (N) Chimneys/flues (N) Rooftop decks, provided they are located at least 15' behind the front façade on flat or sloped roofs (N)

#### **Replacement windows/doors**

Replacement windows of any material, without tinted or reflective glass (S) Doors (N) Security bars (N)

#### **Building features**

Light fixtures (N) Vents/fans (N) Dish antennas and all mast TV antennas (N) Shutters (N) Drainage features (N) Utility meters (N) Window boxes (N) Awnings (N) Stoops/steps/guard & handrails (N)

# REAR

#### **Demolition/Capsulation**

Demolition and capsulation of 250 or less of square feet of rear wall area, below the second floor window sills (N)
Demolition and capsulation of 100 gross square feet of building area (e.g. existing one story additions) below the second floor window sills and accessory structures (N)
Demolition of all fences (N)
Accessibility features when no longer needed (N)

#### Site elements

Fences, except hollow vinyl fences (S)
Ground mounted HVAC (N)
Decks/patios less than 2 ft. above grade (N)
Freestanding (permanent) planters and retaining walls less than 2 ft. high (N)
Non-permanent yard features and art (N)
Paving (N)
Bollards (N)

#### **Exterior finishes**

Painting of, or stucco applied to, unpainted masonry (B) Siding, including fiber cement siding and synthetic trim (S) Paint color (N)

#### <u>Roofs</u>

Dormers (B) Replacement roofing (S) Skylights (S) Visible rooftop HVAC screening (or waiver) (S) Solar panels (N) Chimneys/flues (N) Rooftop decks, provided they are located at least 15' behind the front façade on flat or sloped roofs (N)

#### **Replacement windows/doors**

Replacement windows of any material, without tinted or reflective glass (S) Doors (N) Security bars (N)

Building features Light fixtures (N) Vents/fans (N) Dish antennas and all mast TV antennas (N) Shutters (N) Drainage features (N)

#### New construction

Permanent planters attached to the building (B) Decks and balconies (B) Door hoods, porches or porticos (B) Accessibility features (B) Accessory structures under 50 sq. ft. for corner lots (S)

#### New construction

Door hoods, porches or porticos (S) Permanent planters attached to the building (S) Accessory structures under 50 sq. ft. for corner lots (S) Accessibility features (N) Utility meters (N) Window boxes (N) Awnings (N) Stoops/steps/guard & handrails (N) Alterations below the second floor window sills (N)

#### New construction

Permanent planters attached to the building (N)
Accessory structures no greater than one story, 256 gross sq ft .and 11.5 feet high (N)
One-story additions no more than 250 gross sq. ft. of floor area and no taller than 2nd floor window sills (N)
Decks/patios below the second floor window sills (N)
Door hoods, porches or porticos below second floor window sill (N)
Accessibility features (N)

- 1. Unless specifically exempted here, the BAR must approve any alterations, additions, demolition and/or capsulation.
- 2. All projects must comply with zoning ordinance and building code requirements, and a building permit may be required.
- 3. All work approved by Staff through the administrative approval process must still be consistent with all BAR Design Guidelines, as amended, and policies.
- 4. Corner buildings have two street facing elevations (fronts) and two non-street facing elevations (sides).