Alexandria Boards of Architectural Review
Window Policy

Adopted 10/20/2010 (OHAD) & 10/27/2010 (PG)
Amended 1/3/2018 (OHAD) & 11/20/2013 (PG)

A. General

1. Direct replacement of any window requires an administrative finding of appropriateness from the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) staff, under sec. 10-109 and 10-209 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance. A building permit from Code Administration is also required per a City Code amendment, effective June 1, 2010.
2. BAR staff may administratively approve the direct replacement of windows in the existing openings which comply with all of the policies stated in section B, below, and with the Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications listed in section C, below. Prior to any approval, qualified BAR staff must first field survey and confirm the existing window's age, architectural style and condition.
3. Where staff makes a written finding that a window is not visible from a public right-of- way, the window is not regulated by the BAR and may be replaced with any suitable window allowed by the Virginia Construction Code. However, whether visible or not, a building permit is required from Code Administration to replace a window in the historic districts.
4. Proposed replacement windows not in compliance with the Board's adopted policies, or not architecturally compatible or historically appropriate in the opinion of staff, require review and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the BAR at a public hearing. The BAR will evaluate such cases on the merits of that particular building and the window product proposed. Refer to the chapter on Windows in the BAR's *Design Guidelines* and the Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide for additional information.
5. Any appropriate and compatible modern window permitted by this Window Policy or approved by the Board as part of the overall building's Certificate of Appropriateness approval may be used on new buildings and additions.
6. Vinyl or vinyl clad windows, and windows with removable muntins ("grilles") or muntins sandwiched between the glass, are not considered appropriate or compatible in any location in the Old and Historic Alexandria District and are only considered appropriate on Later (post 1931) buildings in very limited circumstances in the Parker-Gray District.
7. The use of storm windows is strongly encouraged to protect historic windows and to conserve energy. According to the BAR's adopted *Design Guidelines*, storm windows are not regulated by the BAR and do not require a building permit but they should be installed so as not to damage historic material and to be visually minimally obtrusive. Energy panels may be used on single glazed replacement window sash.
8. These policies may be amended by the Boards as new materials become available but will be reviewed by the Board and updated at least every five years.

B. Staff Administrative Approval of Replacement Windows

Staff may administratively approve direct replacement of windows if the proposed windows comply with the Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications (p.2) and all of the policies stated below:

1. Original Windows

All original or previously replaced windows with either wood-pegged mortise and tenon sash joinery or with cylinder ("wavy") glass must be repaired and retained. This generally applies to all 18th or 19th century buildings but the use of cylinder glass can extend to 1930. Where staff confirms in the field that these elements are too deteriorated to repair, they may be replicated to match exactly on a case by case basis. Original window frames and trim from the 18th and 19th centuries must also be preserved and repaired or replicated.

2. **Previously Replaced Windows**
   Previously replaced windows which contain modern frames, sash and smooth (sheet, plate or float) glass may be replaced with one of the following in the historically appropriate style:
   a. 18th and 19th century buildings with multi-light sash must use single glazed painted wood windows on the street facades. Energy panels may be used on single glazed replacement sash. Secondary elevations of these buildings may use painted wood simulated divided light insulated glass windows.
   b. 1-over-1, or 2-over-2 sash windows with modern float glass in modern sash may be replaced with double glazed painted wood windows on any façade.
   c. Buildings whose sash was previously replaced but which retain their historic frames must use appropriate sash replacement kits that preserve the existing frames.
3. **Double Glazing**
   Double glazed (insulated) and simulated divided light painted wood windows may be used throughout on buildings or additions constructed after 1930, when Thermopane brand insulated glass windows were invented.
4. **Aluminum Clad Wood, Wood Composite, and Fiberglass**
   ~~High quality, appropriately detailed a~~ Aluminum clad wood, wood composite, or fiberglass replacement windows may be used in both historic districts on buildings constructed after 1934 ~~1965, when these windows became commercially available~~. For buildings located in the Parker-Gray District, use the *Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide* to determine additional applicable locations. These windows may also be used on any 20th century commercial building more than four stories in height and on multifamily projects with more than four dwelling units. Aluminum clad wood or fiberglass windows may generally replace steel sash windows on any building when using the same light configuration, color and operation, except where staff believes an architecturally significant building has existing intact and restorable steel sash.

C. Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications

Windows may be provided by any manufacturer but their construction materials and form must comply with the specifications below in order to be approved administratively by BAR staff:

1. Wood replacement windows must be full frame or sash replacement kits in the existing frame rather than insert or pocket replacements. Fiberglass insert windows must have tight tolerances with minimal jamb widths and overlay panning;
2. The dimensions and proportions of the window rails, stiles, muntins, frame, sill and exterior trim must match historically appropriate window proportions;
3. Multi-light insulated glass windows must have permanently fixed muntins on both the interior and exterior, with spacer bars between the glass that are a non-reflective, medium value color;
4. Muntins must be paintable and have a putty glaze profile on the exterior;
5. All glazing must be clear, non-reflective and without tint. Low-E (low emissivity) glazing is encouraged for energy conservation but the glass must have a minimum 72% visible light transmission (VLT) with a through-the-glass shading coefficient between 0.87 – 1.0, and a reflectance of less than 10%. Low-E 272 generally meets these criteria;
6. The vinyl weatherstrip portion of the wood window jambs should be minimally visible;
7. Insect screen frames must match the color of the window frame and the screen mesh must be a neutral color with sufficient light transmittance that the window sash remains visible behind; and,
8. The applicant must submit complete window manufacturer specification sheets and a contractor order form to BAR staff with the building permit application to confirm compliance with these specifications.