

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 6, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Architectural Review

FROM: Historic Preservation Staff

SUBJECT: Window Policy and Replacement Specification Edits

At the February 5, 2020 hearing, staff introduced potential edits to the Board's *Alexandria New and Replacement Window Performance Specifications in the Historic Districts* and the window replacement section of the *BAR Policies for Administrative Approval* (both attached). Staff asked the BAR to consider changes to simplify the document and make it more user-friendly.

Determining compliance with the policy has always been challenging, particularly for property owners, due to the intentionally different marketing nomenclature used by the various window manufacturers on their, often, cumbersome websites. This is principally related to finding an accepted industry standard for "clear" energy-efficient glass and for defining the composition of an appropriate and sustainable "composite" window frame and sash material. Fortunately, in the last ten years, window construction technology has evolved and the quality and detailing of new windows are visually much closer to historic proportions and detailing. Staff's proposed changes clarified the policy and specifications while still adhering to the goals of the original policy to:

1. Preserve existing historic windows on Early buildings;
2. Allow for their replacement when they are not reasonable repairable; and
3. Ensure that new windows are historically appropriate in material, form, and design.

Due to covid-19 restrictions, the Design Guideline subcommittee has been unable to meet to discuss these proposed changes. However, the Board expressed appreciation and support for the changes at the February 5, 2020 hearing. Since that time, Historic Preservation staff has incorporated input into an updated version of proposed changes to the *Alexandria New and Replacement Window Performance Specifications in the Historic Districts*. The updated version and the February 2020 version are both attached. Staff requests that the BAR approve these updated modifications at the January 6, 2021 hearing. Once approved, staff requests that the updated version be included in the window replacement section of the *BAR Policies for Administrative Approval*. Applicants will therefore be able to refer to a single document when determining whether or not their windows comply with BAR policies and guidelines.