

# BAR POLICIES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL IN THE OLD AND HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT<sup>1</sup> AND IN THE PARKER-GRAY DISTRICT FOR COMMERCIAL USES

Adopted 3/2/2011  
Amended 2/21/2018, 3/22/2018, 5/16/2018, 7/18/18 (PG), 2/3/2021

## **THE BAR PROCESS**

The primary purpose of the BAR is to preserve historic material, which in many cases can be retained and repaired, rather than replaced.

There are three different levels of BAR approval in the historic districts:

- No BAR approval
- BAR staff administrative approval (as outlined in the attached table)
- BAR approval at a public hearing

Please contact BAR staff to determine what type of approval your project requires. BAR staff can be reached at [preservation@alexandriava.gov](mailto:preservation@alexandriava.gov) or 703-746-3833.

All work Must comply with the [Zoning Ordinance](#). Zoning staff can be reached at [pczoning@alexandriava.gov](mailto:pczoning@alexandriava.gov) or 703-746-4333.

### **I. No BAR Approval**

The items listed below do not require BAR approval:

- Art (as defined in the zoning ordinance)
- At-grade paving not used for alleys, drives or parking
- Removable chimney caps
- Door hardware, mailboxes and house numbers
- Play equipment (not including playhouses)
- Plant materials
- Retaining walls under 2 feet in height
- Storm windows
- Storm doors (full view)
- Small dish antennae less than 2 feet in diameter on non-street-facing elevations
- Security cameras measuring less than one cubic foot each
- Security light fixtures (no more than two) on each non-street-facing elevation
- Portable planters, as defined in the City Code
- Free Little Libraries
- Seasonal holiday decorations

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<sup>1</sup> For one and two family residential projects in the Parker-Gray District, refer to the 2012 [Residential Reference Guide](#) and adopted Design Guideline chapters instead of this policy.





<b>Fences and gates</b>	<p>New and replacement rear and side yard fences up to 6 feet in height and constructed of wood, metal or masonry.</p> <p>New and replacement front yard fences (3 ½ feet in height and 50 percent open) provided they are historically appropriate in design and constructed of wood, metal or masonry.</p> <p>BAR approval of a waiver is required for any fence located in a vision clearance area or if a fence exceeds the height limitations noted above.</p>
<b>HVAC</b>	<p>Minimally visible ground mounted condenser units in side and rear yards. If a unit is visible, screening is required unless it is waived by the BAR at a public hearing.</p>
<b>Lighting</b>	<p>New and replacement light fixtures that are architecturally and historically appropriate.</p>
<b>Masonry repointing</b>	<p>Paint removal and repointing must protect existing masonry and new mortar must match the historic mortar color, composition, texture and profile.</p>
<b>Roof Replacement</b>	<p>For buildings with historic roofs beyond repair or those with previously replaced roofs, replacement materials should match the original in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and should utilize the same materials and installation method to the maximum extent possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original slate or tile roofing must be replaced with the same material, style, color and shape.</li> <li>• Original metal roofing must be replaced with the same style metal roofing (standing seam, flat seam or stamped shingle). Pre-formed and pre-finished standing seam metal may replace field installed standing seam if the seams and metal pan are the same sizes. Solid copper may replace painted standing seam metal roofing.</li> <li>• Original composition roofing may be replaced with architectural grade composition roofing or any other stylistically appropriate roofing material. Three-tab composition shingles are not appropriate except where evidence confirms it was the original roofing material.</li> <li>• Original synthetic slate roofs can be replaced with real slate, synthetic slate, or architectural grade composition shingles.</li> <li>• Original wood shingle roofs that had been replaced with standing seam metal roof in the past can be replaced with standing seam metal or wood shingles.</li> </ul> <p>Where the original roof material is missing and cannot be determined from documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence, roofing historically appropriate to the age of the structure must be utilized.</p>

<b>Sheds and accessory structures *</b>	A shed or small accessory building limited to 65 square feet and 8 feet maximum height, provided it is not located on a permanent foundation and may be easily removed.
<b>Shutters</b>	Shutters, provided the following criteria are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are historically and architecturally appropriate, sized to fit the opening and operable</li> <li>• They are constructed of wood or a solid-through-the-core, millable composite material with a smooth finish</li> </ul>
<b>Siding and trim</b>	For buildings or additions constructed prior to 1935, the applicant must, working with staff, undertake the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If multiple layers of siding exist, remove at least one test patch a minimum size of 2 feet by 2 feet on each elevation in order to reveal the first layer of siding</li> <li>• BAR staff must visit the site to determine whether any extant historic siding can be retained and be reasonably repaired and patched</li> <li>• If staff finds that the existing historic siding is beyond reasonable repair, new siding must match the profile, exposure and design of the original. If historic siding is not present, historically appropriate wood siding must be used.</li> </ul> <p>Buildings and additions constructed after 1934 may use fiber cement (e.g. HardiePlank) or composite (e.g. Boral) siding and trim with an architecturally appropriate profile, provided it has a smooth finish.</p> <p>Composite trim in certain limited locations on buildings constructed before 1935, such as the fascia board behind gutters or a water table, where wood trim is consistently exposed to moisture.</p>
<b>Stoops, steps and railings</b>	New stoops, provided that they are constructed with historically appropriate materials and design.
	New handrails if they are visually minimal (post and rail without balusters), and guardrails required by the building code, provided they are constructed in a historically appropriate style.
<b>Utilities</b>	Electrical utility meters on nonstreet-facing elevations, provided they are painted to match the adjacent wall surface. For gas meters, see the Board’s adopted policy for <a href="#">Administrative Approval of Gas Meters</a> .
<b>Vents</b>	Vents measuring less than one cubic foot, provided that the color matches the adjacent surface.

	<p>Requests for vents on street-facing elevations must include documentation that there is no reasonable alternative.</p>
<b>Window replacement</b>	<p>Buildings or portions of buildings constructed before 1935 with previously replaced windows (not having wood-pegged mortise and tenon sash joinery or cylinder “wavy” glass), or historic windows too deteriorated to repair, as determined by staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Historically appropriate multi-light sash must be single-glazed wood windows on street facing elevations (energy panels may be used). On non-street-facing elevations, wood windows may be double-glazed (insulated).</li><li>• Historically appropriate one-over-one and two-over-two windows may be replaced with double-glazed wood windows on any elevation.</li><li>• Original window frames and trim must be preserved and repaired.</li></ul> <p>On buildings or portions of buildings constructed after 1934, modern window materials, such as aluminum-clad wood, wood composite or fiberglass (no hollow vinyl), as well as double-glazing, may be used.</p> <p>Aluminum clad and fiberglass windows may generally replace steel sash windows on any building when using the same light configuration and operation.</p> <p>Replacement windows must comply with the <a href="#"><i>Alexandria Replacement Window and Door Performance Specifications</i></a>.</p>