



## DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

301 King Street, Room 2100

[alexandriava.gov/Preservation](http://alexandriava.gov/Preservation)

P.O. Box 178  
Alexandria, VA 22313

Phone 703.746.4666

Fax 703.838.6393

January 2021

Dear Historic District Property Owners:

The City of Alexandria is built upon its past. Our records show that you own a structure located in one of two locally regulated historic districts - the **Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD)** or the **Parker- Gray (P-G) District** - or you own an individually designated **100-Year-Old Building**. Special architectural protections regulate the exterior of buildings in these areas. Since 1946, the community and the City have worked diligently to preserve the historic resources that create Alexandria's unique character and as owners of properties in historic districts, you are a steward of our collective history.

### **BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW (BAR) APPROVALS**

New construction, demolition and any exterior alterations visible from a public right-of-way (including public alleys and parks) require approval by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR), regardless of the age of the building. Alterations and new construction require a **Certificate of Appropriateness**. Any demolition or capsulation greater than 25 square feet, regardless of visibility, requires a **Permit to Demolish**. *While the Boards do not review paint color, painting of previously unpainted masonry requires a Certificate of Appropriateness.*

Many exterior alterations can be approved administratively by BAR staff within 1-3 business days. These approvals include replacement doors, siding, roofing and windows as well as the installation of new minor architectural elements such as vents, railings and fences. Last year, 70% of requests received administrative approval. Each historic district has different regulations for BAR review and it is best to consult the policies, applications and guidelines found at [alexandriava.gov/Preservation](http://alexandriava.gov/Preservation) or to contact BAR staff.

### **BAR STAFF ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP**

Historic Preservation staff within the Department of Planning & Zoning are available to help you navigate the BAR review process. We encourage you, your architect or your contractor to contact staff early in the project planning process to provide sufficient time in your schedule for the necessary reviews. Please visit our website at [alexandriava.gov/Preservation](http://alexandriava.gov/Preservation) for more information, including the BAR *Design Guidelines* and policies, the *Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide*, applications, and BAR meeting schedules. Should you have any additional questions, or would like to schedule a pre-application meeting or site visit, please contact the Historic Preservation staff at 703.746.3833 or [preservation@alexandriava.gov](mailto:preservation@alexandriava.gov).

*As a reminder, failure to obtain the required BAR Approval or Building Permit prior to undertaking a project may subject both you and your contractor to monetary fines and other penalties, as specified in the Zoning Ordinance and the Uniform Statewide Building Code. In addition, you will be required to correct the violation.*

## **BUILDING PERMITS**

In many cases, a building permit is also required for work described above. **In the historic districts, building permits are required for replacement of over 100 square feet of roofing or siding and for the installation of any windows.** Owners can perform the work themselves, however, if you choose to hire a contractor, please be advised that only contractors currently licensed by the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation are permitted. If you have work performed by unlicensed contractors or without the benefit of permits and City approval, your ability to sell or refinance your home or to file insurance policy claims may be affected. Information about whether a building permit is required and whether a contractor is licensed to work in the City of Alexandria may be obtained by calling the Department of Code Administration at 703.746.4200 or from the City's website at [alexandriava.gov/Code](http://alexandriava.gov/Code).

## **ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY**

The ground beneath modern Alexandria is a record of the past and contains an array of archaeological sites, features, and artifacts that spans thousands of years of human occupation. Recognizing the importance and uniqueness of these historic resources, the City of Alexandria adopted an Archaeological Protection Code, incorporated into the City's Zoning Ordinance in 1992. This has enabled the recovery of information about Alexandria's history and the preservation of sites that otherwise would have been lost. Homeowners and small-scale developments generally are not required to do archaeology before obtaining building permits as the Code does not apply to these projects. The Code requires developers to work with City archaeologists to evaluate and sometimes excavate archaeological resources before ground disturbance occurs on large-scale construction projects. City archaeologists also partner with homeowners, realtors, and neighborhood groups to search for, study, and share our rich history buried underground. Alexandria Archaeology staff also offer preservation assistance before renovation or new construction takes place, if requested. Alexandria Archaeology now manages over 2,000,000 artifacts collected from over 200 archaeological sites scattered across the City. The Alexandria Archaeology Museum, on the third floor of the Torpedo Factory Arts Center, showcases some of the successes of the Archaeological Protection Code.

## **SHARE INFORMATION WITH NEIGHBORS**

With your help, we can keep Alexandria's historic buildings, sites and districts safe and beautiful for future generations. Every resident and property owner helps to maintain the integrity and character of the historic district.

Sincerely,

Karl Moritz, Director  
Department of Planning &  
Zoning

Gregg Fields, Director  
Department of Code  
Administration

Eleanor Breen  
City Archaeologist