



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Proposed Updates to Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Design Guidelines Chapters

**Public Meeting
August 19, 2026**



Agenda



- 1 Background to BAR**
- 2 Background to Design Guidelines Committee**
- 3 Proposed Drafts**
- 4 Timeline for community engagement and BAR adoption**
- 5 Public Forum**



Background to the BAR

▶ Board of Architectural Review

- ▶ Three locally regulated historic districts: Old and Historic Alexandria (OHAD), Parker-Gray (PG), One-Hundred-Year-Old Buildings
- ▶ Alterations to any building in the districts require approval from the BAR
- ▶ BAR consists of 7 members
- ▶ Some alterations require approval from BAR at public hearing; some require administrative approval from staff (~75% approved administratively)



Background to the BAR

- ▶ **What are Design Guidelines?**
 - ▶ Set of design standards and principles, not yes/no policies
 - ▶ Provide information to applicants on required approvals and Preservation best practices
 - ▶ Provide guidance to the Board and staff for reviewing the appropriateness of alterations



BAR Design Guidelines Committee

- ▶ **Preservation Design Guidelines adopted in 1993**
 - ▶ Not searchable, poor-quality graphics, not ADA-accessible, outdated references, high use of technical language
- ▶ **Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide (RRG) adopted in 2012**
- ▶ **Design Guidelines Committee established in 2019**
 - ▶ Goal is an update to the guidelines to replace the 1993 guidelines, focused on format
 - ▶ Meetings are open to the public but comment not taken; announced on eNews and on City Calendar



BAR Design Guidelines Committee

▶ Progress so far

- ▶ New universal format adopted
- ▶ 10 chapters adopted by BAR, 11 under review, ~12 more to review
- ▶ Next set of chapters will also undergo public review
- ▶ Goal is to finish all chapters in 2027



BAR Design Guidelines Committee

DOORS

INTRODUCTION

The installation of new exterior doors, whether pedestrian or vehicular, as well as storm doors visible from a public way require the approval of a certificate of appropriateness by the Boards of Architectural Review.

PEDESTRIAN DOORWAYS

Exterior doors and storm doors constitute prominent visual details of the main facade of a building. In addition to the door itself, details surrounding the doorway are also important visual elements of a building. Such detailing includes door frames, glass, moldings, pediments, hoods and hardware. Exterior doors and surrounding details should complement the architecture of the structure and not detract from it.

A large number of architectural styles are represented in the buildings in the historic districts and each style incorporates distinctive doorways and surrounding architectural

elements. Care should be taken that the character defining features of these doorways are maintained. For example, a decorative door surround should not be removed to install a new door.

Doors and their surrounds are as much a character defining feature of architectural styles as are windows. For example, Federal and Georgian style residential structures from the late-18th and early-19th century usually have solid wood panel entrance doors. Late 19th century Victorian structures often have wood doors that incorporate glass panels. Main entrance doorways are generally more elaborate than doorways on secondary or rear entrances to a building.

Modern exterior and storm doors often contain inappropriate decorative elements that detract from the architectural integrity of the structure. For example, storm doors with foliated panels are inappropriate on structures within the historic districts.

VEHICULAR DOORWAYS

During the 18th and 19th centuries, separate accessory structures to store horses, wagons and carriages were common. With the advent of the automobile in the late-19th cen-

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT CITY OF ALEXANDRIA



B= Board review at public hearing

S= Staff administrative review

N= No Staff or Board review

PARKER-GRAY RESIDENTIAL REFERENCE GUIDE (Adopted 12/12/2012; Amended 09/24/2025)

Note: Any adopted Parker-Gray Design Guidelines chapters posted on the Preservation website take precedence over the language in this document.

Early Residential Buildings (Built before 1932)

FRONT (street facing)

Demolition/Capsulation

- Demolition of stoops, steps, or railings visible from the public right-of-way (B)
- Demolition of chimneys or masonry flues visible from the public right-of-way (B)
- Capsulation or removal of siding greater than or equal to 25 square feet in area (B)
- Demolition of stoops, steps, or railings less than 25 square feet in area and not visible from the public right-of-way (N)
- Demolition of chimneys or masonry flues less than 25 square feet in area and not visible from the public right-of-way (N)
- Accessibility features (N)

SIDE (non-street facing)

Demolition/Capsulation

- Demolition of stoops, steps, or railings visible from the public right-of-way (B)
- Demolition of chimneys or masonry flues visible from the public right-of-way (B)
- Capsulation or removal of siding greater than or equal to 25 square feet in area (B)
- Demolition of stoops, steps, or railings less than 25 square feet in area and not visible from the public right-of-way (N)
- Demolition of chimneys or masonry flues less than 25 square feet in area and not visible from the public right-of-way (N)
- Accessibility features (N)

REAR (non-street facing)

Demolition/Capsulation

- Demolition of stoops, steps, or railings visible from the public right-of-way (B)
- Demolition of chimneys or masonry flues visible from the public right-of-way (B)
- Capsulation or removal of siding greater than or equal to 25 square feet in area (B)
- Demolition of stoops, steps, or railings less than 25 square feet in area and not visible from the public right-of-way (N)
- Demolition of chimneys or masonry flues less than 25 square feet in area and not visible from the public right-of-way (N)
- Demolition and capsulation of 250 or less square feet of rear wall area, below second floor windowsills (N)
- Demolition and capsulation of 100 gross square feet of

Appropriate



Original Door
Visible Behind
Glass

Inappropriate



Cross-hatch Type
Stamped Metal
Storm Door



BAR Design Guidelines Committee

ROOFING

OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA



BAR Review Levels

These levels of review are applicable in most cases. Please note that during the administrative review process, Staff may determine that a project requires Board review. Contact Staff at 703.746.3833 to confirm which level of review is required for your project. Also, contact Code Administration at 703.746.4200 to confirm building permit requirements.

NO BAR REVIEW

Repair or in-kind replacement of roofing material less than 25 square feet in area

Construction or modification of drainage elements such as snow guards, leaf guards, gutters, or downspouts

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Repair or appropriate replacement of roofing material greater than or equal to 25 square feet in area

BOARD REVIEW

Any project referred to the Board by Staff

Introduction

Roofs are among the most visually prominent features in the historic districts. The choice of roofing material is a key consideration in both the rehabilitation of historic structures and the design of new construction. Wood shingles were the predominant roofing material in Alexandria until the early 19th century. Historic wood shingle roofs were hand-split and hand-planed to a uniform thickness, and were often painted or scalloped to simulate tile or slate.



Proposed Drafts

1. **Utility Meters + Electric Vehicle Chargers**
2. **Mechanical Equipment, HVAC, + Vents**
3. **Exterior Lighting**
4. **Security Features**
5. **Infrastructure in the Public Right-of-Way**
6. **Small Cell Facilities + Antennas**
7. **Accessory Structures**
8. **Building Accessories**
9. **Planters**
10. **Porches + Porticos**
11. **Decks, Roof Decks, + Balconies**





Utility Meters + Electric Vehicle Chargers

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT

OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

In-kind replacement of electric and gas meters

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Installation of new electric meters and electric vehicle charging stations on **non-street-facing sides**

Installation of **new gas meters** that comply with these guidelines

BOARD REVIEW

Installation of new electric meters and electric vehicle charging stations on **street-facing sides**

Installation of new gas meters that do not comply with these guidelines





Mechanical Equipment, HVAC, + Vents

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Installation of replacement of ground-mounted HVAC on **non-street-facing sides**

Installation of window HVAC units

In-kind replacement of existing rooftop HVAC equipment

In-kind replacement of existing vents and exhaust/supply fans

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Installation of replacement of ground-mounted HVAC on **street-facing sides**

Installation of roof-mounted HVAC located at least 15 feet behind the front facade

Rooftop screening and waivers

Installation of vents and exhaust/supply fans measuring less than 12 inches in diameter and projecting less than 6 inches from the wall or roof

BOARD REVIEW

Installation of roof-mounted HVAC located less than 15 feet behind the front facade

Installation of vents and exhaust/supply fans measuring greater than or equal to 1 foot in diameter or projecting 6 inches or more from the wall or roof





Mechanical Equipment, HVAC, + Vents

OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Installation or replacement of ground-mounted HVAC on non-street-facing sides

Installation of window HVAC units

In-kind replacement of existing rooftop HVAC equipment

In-kind replacement of existing vents and exhaust/supply fans

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Installation or replacement of ground-mounted HVAC on street-facing sides

Installation of vents and exhaust/supply fans measuring less than 12 inches in diameter and projecting less than 6 inches from the wall or roof

BOARD REVIEW

Installation of roof-mounted HVAC

Rooftop screening and waivers

Installation of vents and exhaust/supply fans measuring greater than or equal to 1 foot in diameter or projecting 6 inches or more from the wall or roof





Exterior Lighting

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT

OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Installation of externally mounted floodlights on non-street-facing sides

In-kind replacement of architecturally appropriate exterior light fixtures

Installation of freestanding light fixtures less than 12 inches in height

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Installation of new wall-mounted exterior light fixtures

BOARD REVIEW

Freestanding light fixtures 12 inches or greater in height

Externally mounted floodlights on street-facing sides





Security Features

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT

OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Door hardware, cameras, and lockboxes

Security cameras measuring less than 1 cubic foot

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Replacement of window security bars

BOARD REVIEW

Installation of window or door security bars

Security cameras measuring 1 cubic foot or greater





Infrastructure in the Public Right-of-Way

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT

OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Temporary parklets, street furniture, and outdoor dining structures

Temporary structures used for traffic, parking, and construction

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Permanent bollards

BOARD REVIEW

Installation of bus shelters, street furniture, bicycle parking racks, light poles, and other permanent elements not previously approved by the Board





Small Cell Facilities + Antennas

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Replacement in-kind of utility poles

Installation of dish antennas less than 2 feet in diameter on non-street-facing sides

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Installation of penthouse wall mounted antennas

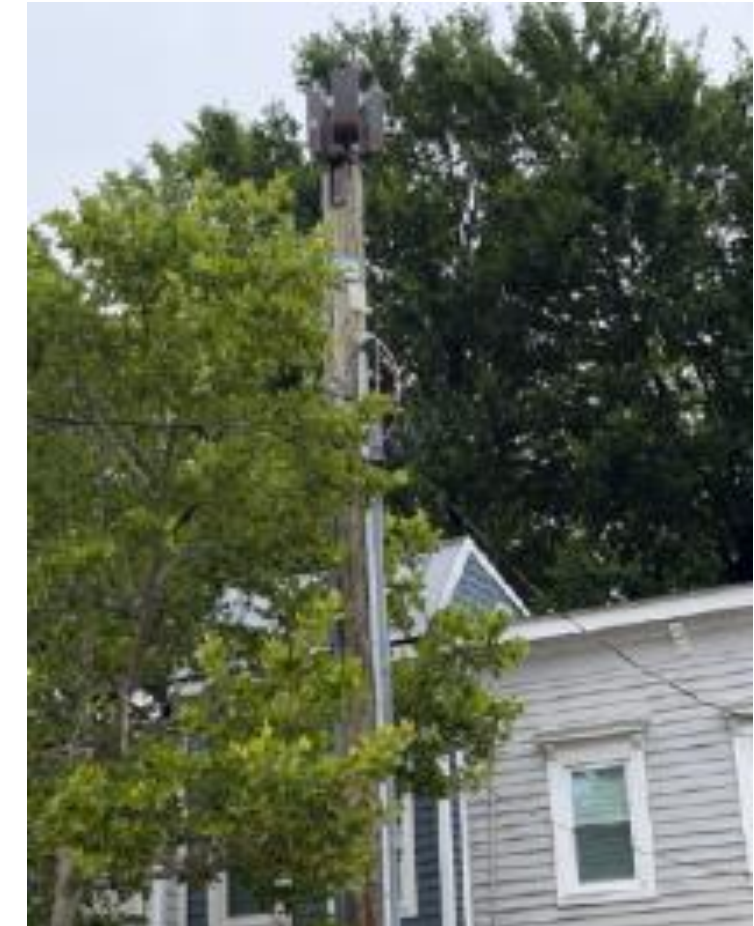
Installation of flat roof mounted antennas set back a minimum of 10 feet from the building face

Installation of dish antennas less than 2 feet in diameter on street-facing sides

BOARD REVIEW

Installation of new small cell poles

Installation of dish antennas 2 feet or greater in diameter





Accessory Structures

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Construction of accessory structures not visible from the public right-of-way

Demolition of accessory structures up to 100 square feet in area and located in a rear yard

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Construction of accessory structures less than or equal to 65 square feet in area and 8 feet in height

Construction of freestanding fireplaces and ovens

BOARD REVIEW

Construction of accessory structures over 65 square feet in area or 8 feet in height

Demolition of accessory structures over 100 square feet in area and located in a front or side yard





Accessory Structures

OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Construction of accessory structures not visible from the public right-of-way

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Construction of accessory structures less than or equal to 65 square feet in area and 8 feet in height

Construction of freestanding fireplaces and ovens

BOARD REVIEW

Construction of accessory structures over 65 square feet in area or 8 feet in height

Demolition of accessory structures





Building Accessories

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT

OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Installation or replacement of temporary, non-permanently attached building accessories

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Installation or replacement of permanently attached building accessories less than or equal to 4 square feet in area

BOARD REVIEW

Installation or replacement of permanently attached building accessories greater than 4 square feet in area





Planters

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Installation of temporary, removable planter boxes

Installation of permanent planters less than 2 feet in height on Later Buildings

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Installation of permanent planters 2 feet in height or greater on non-street-facing sides of Later Buildings

Installation of permanent planters less than 2 feet in height on Early Buildings

BOARD REVIEW

Installation of permanent planters 2 feet in height or greater on street-facing sides of Early Buildings





Porches + Porticos

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

N/A

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

In-kind replacement of porch railings or posts

BOARD REVIEW

Construction or modification of porches or porticos

Demolition or removal of porches or porticos

Screening in or enclosing a porch





Decks, Roof Decks, + Balconies

PARKER - GRAY DISTRICT

OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT

NO BAR REVIEW

Construction of decks not visible from the public right-of-way

In-kind replacement of railings and posts on decks, roof decks, and balconies that comply with these guidelines

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Installation of cable and glass railings on Later Buildings

BOARD REVIEW

Construction and replacement of decks, roof decks, and balconies visible from the public right-of-way

Construction and replacement of penthouse and stair structures





Timeline/Next Steps

**Public
meeting
August 19,
2026**

**Comment
period open
until
September
2, 2026**

**Staff
updates
drafts
based on
public
feedback**

**Staff brings
updated
drafts to
the Board
for final
adoption
(October
2026)**



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Public Forum

Comments will be taken now as well as
via email at

Brendan.harris@alexandriava.gov

