



**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING**  
301 King Street, Room 2100

Alexandriava.gov/preservation

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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HISTORIC PROPERTY**

Dear Residents and Property Owners:

You are receiving this letter because our records indicate that you own or reside in a structure that is located in one of Alexandria's two locally regulated historic districts in Old Town - the **Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD)** or the **Parker-Gray (P-G) District** - or is an individually designated **100 Year Old Building** located outside of a historic district. In each of these areas, there are special architectural protections for the exterior of buildings. Since 1946, the community and the City government have worked diligently together to preserve the historic resources that create Alexandria's unique character. *There have been a number of recent changes which may impact your future projects and may make the review process significantly easier, particularly for the Parker-Gray District.*

**BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW APPROVALS**

New construction, demolition and any exterior alterations visible from a public right-of-way (which includes public alleys and parks) must be approved by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR). The Boards approve alterations and new construction by issuing a **Certificate of Appropriateness**. The Boards must also approve any demolition or capsulation greater than 25 square feet, regardless of visibility, by issuing a **Permit to Demolish**. While the Boards do not review paint color, painting of previously unpainted masonry requires a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Over the past several years, the Boards have greatly simplified the process for many common minor alterations and repairs and delegated review of these items to BAR staff through an **Administrative Approval** process. The *Design Guidelines* and regulations are slightly different in each district but the following architectural features may generally be administratively approved if they comply with the guidelines:

- |                     |                       |                      |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ doors and windows | ▪ fences and gates    | ▪ shutters           |
| ▪ siding            | ▪ signage and awnings | ▪ steps and railings |
| ▪ roofing           | ▪ HVAC equipment      | ▪ sheds              |
| ▪ exterior vents    | ▪ exterior lighting   | ▪ decks and porches  |

*Please be aware that failure to obtain the required Certificate of Appropriateness, Permit to Demolish, Building Permit or BAR Administrative Approval prior to undertaking a project may subject both you and your contractor to separate 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.*

## BAR STAFF IS AVAILABLE TO HELP

Historic Preservation staff within the Department of Planning & Zoning is available to help you navigate the BAR process. We encourage you, your architect or your contractor to contact staff early in the planning process in order to provide sufficient time in your design and construction schedule for the necessary reviews. Please visit the City's website at [www.alexandriava.gov/preservation](http://www.alexandriava.gov/preservation) for more detailed information, including the BAR *Design Guidelines*, the Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide, applications and forms, and Board meeting schedules. Some applications may now be processed by staff via e-mail without your having to visit City Hall. Where a BAR public hearing is necessary, staff can explain the applications, supporting materials and public notice requirements. Should you have any additional questions about historically appropriate materials, or would like to schedule a pre-application meeting or site visit, please call the Historic Preservation staff at 703-746-3833.

## BUILDING PERMITS

In many cases, a building permit is also required for work described above. For instance, 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 and residents are cautioned to use only licensed contractors. 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 <http://alexandriava.gov/code>.

## SHARE INFORMATION WITH NEIGHBORS

With your help, we can keep Alexandria's historic buildings and districts safe and beautiful for future generations. We hope that you will share this important information with your neighbors and contractors, thereby ensuring that everyone knows to obtain the proper approvals and permits before embarking on a project affecting the exterior.

We also encourage you to sign up for the City of Alexandria's free *eNews* service to receive updates from various agencies about topics of interest to you, including Historic Preservation, Building and Fire Code Administration, or Construction/Permitting. You can subscribe to *eNews* at the City's website <https://enews.alexandriava.gov>.

Sincerely,



Karl Moritz, Acting Director  
Department of Planning and Zoning



John Catlett, Director  
Department of Code Administration