

PARKER-GRAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES HOW TO

The locally regulated Parker-Gray historic district was created in 1984 to preserve affordable housing, retain the residential scale of the neighborhood, and control future growth associated with the opening of new Metro system. The Parker-Gray District has its own Board of Architectural Review (BAR) and from 1993 to 2012 the Board used the same Design Guidelines as the Old and Historic Alexandria District. In 2012, the Parker-Gray BAR adopted the Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide (RRG), which established different standards for the Parker-Gray District, including reduced regulations, greater flexibility in design and materials, and a less stringent review authority. The RRG formed the basis for these Parker-Gray Design Guidelines.

WHAT ARE DESIGN GUIDELINES?

In addition to identifying required BAR approvals, the Guidelines also describe historically appropriate (recommended) – and inappropriate (discouraged) – preservation practices. Individual chapters may include photographs or drawings to illustrate projects which are recommended or discouraged.

HOW DO I USE THESE GUIDELINES?

If you have received this How-To you are likely undertaking a project in the Parker-Gray District. In order to identify what level of BAR review is required for the project, you must first know the age of the building and the affected elevations. After you have this information, you will use the Required Approval matrix at the top of each chapter to determine what level of BAR review – if any – your project is subject to.

REQUIRED APPROVALS			
YEAR BUILT	FRONT (STREET FACING)	SIDE (NON-STREET FACING)	REAR (NON-STREET FACING)
Pre - 1932	BOARD REVIEW	STAFF REVIEW	NO CoFA
Post - 1931	STAFF REVIEW	NO CoFA	NO CoFA

FIGURE 1: Approval Matrix Example

CofA stands for Certificate of Appropriateness

Building Age (Year Built)

The Period of Significance for the Parker-Gray district is 1810 to 1931. Buildings constructed before 1931 are considered “early” buildings while those constructed in 1932 or later are considered “later” buildings. Keep in mind that some early houses in the historic district have additions constructed after 1932, which may cause them to have different requirements depending on the location of the proposed project. The Preservation website (www.alexandriava.gov/preservation) includes both an individual list of buildings in the district and a larger version of the map at the right (figure 2) which will help you to identify the age of your



FIGURE 2: PG Early/Late Map

Project Location

In Parker-Gray, the Board approved a hierarchy of elevations, differentiating between street-facing elevations (fronts) and non-street-facing elevations (sides and rears). You will need to know where on the building the proposed work will be undertaken because it will impact the level of BAR approval. Certain projects, such as a wholesale window replacement, will impact all elevations, while a portico addition to the front of the house will only impact the front, street-facing elevation. The image on the right (Figure 3) shows a typical Parker-Gray block and identifies both street-facing and non-street-facing elevations. Note that corner buildings have two fronts and two non-street-facing side elevations.



FIGURE 3: Typical PG Block

Approval Requirements

There are three levels of BAR Review. While some projects will require BAR approval at a public hearing, in the Parker-Gray District many projects can be approved at a staff level. Some projects may not require any Board or staff approval. If staff approval is required, this can typically be accomplished within one or two days of receipt of a BAR Administrative Approval application, and the application fee is less than a full public hearing. For projects not requiring any BAR approval, Staff must confirm this in a written finding. Look for the Required Approval icons (Figure 4) in each chapter.

DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT FOR MY PROJECT:

Many projects in the historic district require a building permit from the City's Department of Code Administration, including: window replacements, siding repair over 100 square feet, roof replacement over 100 square foot, and fences and walls over 6' in height.



FIGURE 4: Required Approval icons

Is It A Repair?

Many home improvement projects qualify as repairs and will not require BAR approval or fee. In many instances, you will need to consult with BAR staff so that they can make the written determination that your proposed project meets the definition of a repair. The repair may be documented on a BAR form so that when you request approval of a building permit the building officials are aware that BAR staff has determined your project is a repair. There is no fee charged for repairs in the historic district. Examples of common repairs include historically appropriate replacement in-kind of a damaged wood fence in a rear yard with a new fence, replacement of rotted window trim, or replacement of the roof on your house with an appropriate roof material.

NEED HELP?

BAR staff can be contacted at 703-746-3833
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