

Boards of Architectural Review Window Policy

Adopted 10/20/2010 (OHAD) & 10/27/2010 (PG)
Amended 12/04/2013 (OHAD) & 11/20/2013 (PG)

A. General

1. Direct replacement of any window requires an administrative finding of appropriateness from the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) staff, under sec. 10-109 and 10-209 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance. A building permit from Code Administration is also required per a City Code amendment, effective June 1, 2010.
2. BAR staff may administratively approve the direct replacement of windows in the existing openings which comply with all of the policies stated in section B, below, and with the Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications listed in section C, below. Prior to any approval, qualified BAR staff must first survey and confirm the existing window's age, architectural style and condition in the field.
3. Where staff makes a written finding that a window is not visible from a public right-of-way, the window is not regulated by the BAR and may be replaced with any suitable window allowed by the Uniform Statewide Building Code. However, whether visible or not, a building permit is required from Code Administration to replace a window in the historic districts.
4. Proposed replacement windows not in compliance with the Board's adopted policies, or not architecturally compatible or historically appropriate in the opinion of staff, require review and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the BAR. The BAR will evaluate such cases on the merits of that particular building and the window product proposed.
5. Vinyl or vinyl clad windows, and windows with removable muntins ("grilles") or muntins sandwiched between the glass, are not considered appropriate or compatible by the Boards and may not be approved administratively as replacement windows.
6. The use of storm windows is encouraged to protect historic windows and to conserve energy. According to the BAR's adopted *Design Guidelines*, storm windows are not regulated by the BAR and do not require a building permit but they should be installed so as not to damage historic material and to be visually minimally obtrusive. Energy panels may be used on single glazed replacement window sash.
7. Any appropriate and compatible modern windows may be used on new buildings and additions approved by the Board as part of the overall building's Certificate of Appropriateness approval. Refer to the chapter on Windows in the BAR's *Design Guidelines* and the Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide for additional information.
8. These policies may be amended by the Boards as new materials become available but will be reviewed by the Board and updated at least every five years.

B. Staff Administrative Approval of Replacement Windows

Staff may administratively approve direct replacement of windows if the proposed windows comply with the Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications (p.2) and all of the policies stated below:

1. Original Windows

All original or previously replaced windows with either mortise and tenon ("pegged") sash joinery, or with cylinder ("wavy") glass must be repaired and retained. This generally applies to all 18th or 19th century buildings. Where staff confirms in the field that these elements are too deteriorated to repair, they may be replicated to match exactly on a case by case basis. Original window frames from the 18th and 19th centuries must also be preserved and repaired or replicated.

2. Previously Replaced Windows

Windows, or window sash, previously replaced with modern frames and smooth (sheet, plate or float) glass may be replaced with one of the following in the historically appropriate style:

- a. Single glazed painted wood sash must be used on the street facades of 18th and 19th century buildings with multi-light windows. Painted wood simulated divided light insulated glass windows may be used on the secondary elevations of these buildings. Energy panels may be used on single glazed replacement windows.
- b. 1-over-1, or 2-over-2 sash windows with modern float glass may be replaced with double glazed painted wood windows on any façade
- c. Appropriate sash replacement kits must be used in buildings whose sash was previously replaced but which retain the historic frame.

3. Double Glazing

Double glazed (insulated) and simulated divided light painted wood windows may be used throughout on buildings or additions constructed after 1930, when Thermopane insulated glass windows were invented.

4. Aluminum Clad Wood, Wood Composite, and Fiberglass

High quality, appropriately detailed aluminum clad wood, wood composite, or fiberglass replacement windows may be used on buildings constructed after 1965, when these windows became commercially available. For buildings located in the Parker-Gray District, use the Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide to determine appropriate locations. These windows may also be used on any 20th century commercial building more than four stories in height and on multifamily projects with greater than four units. Aluminum clad wood or fiberglass windows may generally replace steel sash windows on any building when using the same light configuration, color and operation, except where staff believes an architecturally significant building has intact and restorable existing steel sash.

C. Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications

Windows may be provided by any manufacturer but their construction materials and form must comply with the specifications below in order to be approved administratively by BAR staff.

1. The applicant must use full frame replacement windows or sash replacement kits in the existing frame rather than insert or pocket replacements, except in the case of appropriate fiberglass replacements with minimal jamb width inserts can be used;
2. The dimensions and proportions of the window rails, stiles, muntins, frame, sill and exterior trim must match historically appropriate window proportions;
4. Multi-light insulated glass windows must have permanently fixed muntins on the interior and exterior, with spacer bars between the glass that are a non-reflective, medium value color;
5. Low-E (low emissivity) glazing is encouraged for energy conservation but the glass must be clear, non-reflective and have a minimum 72% visible light transmission (VLT) through the glass a shading coefficient between 0.87 – 1.0, and a reflectance less than 10%. Low-E 272 generally meets these criteria;
6. Muntins must be paintable and have a putty glaze profile on the exterior;
7. The vinyl portion of the wood window jambs should be minimally visible;
8. The frame for insect screens must match the color of the window frame and the screen mesh must be a neutral color with sufficient light transmittance that the window sash remains visible behind; and,
9. The applicant must submit complete window manufacturer specification sheets and a contractor order form to BAR staff for final approval with the building permit application.