

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 23, 2011

TO: Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review

FROM: BAR Staff

SUBJECT: Adoption of Additional BAR Policies

Over the last nine months, BAR Staff and the Boards, along with the Modern & Sustainable Materials for Historic Buildings Ad Hoc Work Group, have been working to develop new BAR policies to supplement the existing BAR *Design Guidelines*. The new policies are intended to provide more clarity for the public, consistency in Staff's and the Boards' actions, and a streamlined BAR process, all the while encouraging the use of modern and sustainable materials, where appropriate. Both BARs adopted the roof materials and windows policies in fall 2010.

Staff now recommends the Board's adoption of the attached policies, which address some of the more minor, but no less common, alterations and small scale new construction projects within the historic districts. The Ad Hoc Work Group met on December 14, 2011, and discussed proposed policies in detail. The Work Group is generally supportive of the proposed policies. The draft policies were also presented to the PG Board at their November 17, 2010 hearing. The attached policy draft reflects the comments of the OHAD Board at their February 16, 2011 hearing.

Staff believes that the adoption of these policies will complete the work program outlined by City Council for the Modern & Sustainable Materials for Historic Buildings Ad Hoc Work Group. All of the new policies adopted by the Boards will be formally reviewed every five years, or more frequently as needed. Public input will be sought for any significant changes to the policies.

UPDATE ON ROOF AND WINDOWS POLICIES

As anticipated, the Board's approval of the roof and windows policies had an immediate and positive impact. Now residents, contractors/architects/builders, *and* Staff have clear guidance on the appropriateness of replacement roofing and windows for all buildings in the historic districts. Between October 28, 2010, and February 9, 2011, Staff administratively approved 25 requests for historically appropriate roof and window replacement projects.

PROPOSED NEW POLICIES

Staff used the existing *Design Guidelines* as a starting point to develop the attached spreadsheet, which, like the *Guidelines*, is organized by alteration/construction type. Altogether there are thirteen new proposed policies, each with specific criteria for Staff

administrative approval. The thirteen policies account for many of the smaller alterations and new construction projects which Staff cannot approve administratively, either because they are not considered repair/replacement or because the *Guidelines* specifically require Board approval, such as the installation of a rear fence or a new storm door. For something as small as the installation of a new front stair railing applicants must now take the time and expense of a full BAR hearing. Staff believes that the new policies make good preservation sense, will result in a much more appropriate level of review, and will allow the Boards to focus on the larger and more significant projects within their respective historic districts.

AUTHORITY

As with the roofing and windows policies, one of the main goals of the additional policies is to clarify where Board approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness is required, and when administrative approval by BAR Staff may be sufficient. Authority for administrative approval comes from Zoning Ordinance Section 10-109 (Section 10-209 in the Parker-Gray historic district), which gives Staff the authority to approve repair or replacement materials, as long as they are considered to be appropriate and compatible with the historic surroundings by Board of Architectural Review policy.

NEXT STEPS

Because some of the proposed policies address the approval of *new* features rather than repair or replacement of existing features – such as the installation of a freestanding tool shed or the addition of a light fixture where one did not previously exist – a zoning ordinance change is required for Staff level administrative approval. These features are identified with an asterisk in the attached spreadsheet. After the Boards adopt these additional policies, Staff will initiate the process of a zoning text amendment to be approved by Planning Commission and City Council. Until that time, only those policies considered historically appropriate repair or replacement can be approved by Staff, subject to the BAR adopted policies.

As with the roofing and windows policies, Staff will make the new information available on the City’s website and will develop handouts for the public and contractors. The City will also produce – with the help of a graphic designer – an illustrated administrative approval guideline for common replacement materials.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Parker-Gray BAR adopt the attached Proposed BAR Policies as addendums to the relevant sections of the existing *Design Guidelines*.

STAFF

Stephanie Sample, Urban Planner
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Modern Materials Ad Hoc Work Group
2. Proposed BAR Policies

Modern & Sustainable Materials for Historic Buildings Ad Hoc Work Group

MEMBERS

Old and Historic Alexandria District BAR

Arthur Keleher
John von Senden

Parker-Gray BAR

Christina Kelly

Historic Alexandria Resources Commission

John Sprinkle

Alexandria Historical Restoration & Preservation Commission

Charles Trozzo

Historic Alexandria Foundation

Gail Rothrock
Laura Trieschmann

Old Town Civic Association

Poul Hertel

Industry

Master Roofing
Old Town Windows and Doors
Smoot Lumber
The Window Man

P&Z Staff

Al Cox
Stephanie Sample

WORK GROUP MEETINGS

5/10/10

8/17/10

10/5/10

12/14/10

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS ATTENDED BY STAFF

OTCA Preservation Committee	3/19/10
HAF Advocacy Committee	4/5/10, 5/17/10
Presentation to the OHAD BAR	4/7/10
Presentation to the PG BAR	4/28/10, update 5/26/10
Restoration & Preservation Commission	5/12/10
OTCA Membership Meeting	6/9/10
HARC meeting	9/21/10

PROPOSED BAR POLICIES

The proposed policies listed below, like the roof and window replacement policies already adopted by the Boards, are intended to supplement the existing *Design Guidelines* and provide a level of certainty and clarity to the public and the building/contracting industry. Many of the general comments incorporated in the roof and windows policies are incorporated in the general section below, followed by specific details for each new policy. Certain items listed below are considered “new” features, rather than historically appropriate repair/replacement, and require a change to the zoning ordinance to allow for Administrative Approval by BAR Staff.

<p><i>General comments applying to <u>all</u> policies</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BAR Staff must visit the subject property to determine whether the proposed alteration/construction is visible from a public right-of-way, and then make a written finding as to whether the improvement is eligible for Administrative Approval by Staff. Proposed alterations/construction not in compliance with the Board’s adopted policies and the <i>Design Guidelines</i>, require review and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the BAR. - If Administrative Approval by Staff is permitted, all of the conditions listed below must be met. - 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. (*) Requires a zoning ordinance amendment before BAR Staff can Administratively Approve (target date Spring 2011). (~) Item may also require a permit through Code Administration.
<p>Residential accessibility structures *~</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temporary ramps/lifts may be approved administratively, provided that they are on a secondary (non-street facing) elevation and do not permanently alter the building. - Wood components must be painted or stained. Other materials permitted by this policy (metal/synthetic/composite) may be considered if painted. - Ramps/lifts must be removed when they are no longer needed.
<p>Storage sheds/playhouses (not play equipment) *</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New and replacement accessory buildings used as tool/storage sheds or playhouses not requiring a building permit and complying with the 50 square foot and 7 foot maximum height limitation of the

	<p>zoning ordinance (section 7-202(B)(4)(b)) may be approved administratively (a plat is required to confirm compliance).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- They must be easily removable and not located on a permanent foundation.- They must be located within a fenced rear yard of an interior lot or behind a six foot tall solid fence on a corner lot.- Due to their limited visibility from a public street, prefabricated sheds utilizing synthetic and/or composite materials may be used.- No gambrel roof (barn like) sheds allowed.
<p>Doors</p>	<p><u>Entry doors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Wood doors are always encouraged and may contain glass panels, if historically appropriate.- Replacement doors on buildings or additions constructed after 1965, when Kaylien Doors began selling fiberglass composite doors and when aluminum clad products were available, may be approved administratively provided that they are replaced with high quality fiberglass or aluminum clad doors in the appropriate architectural style.- Fiberglass and aluminum clad doors must have a smooth or subtle wood grain finish and be field painted.- Fiberglass and aluminum clad doors on street facing facades may not have surface mounted glass stops Art glass panels may be historically appropriate on late 19th or early 20th century doors but require Board approval. <p><u>Storm doors</u> *</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- New full- view storm doors with minimal rails and stiles may be approved administratively provided that they are constructed of wood, solid-thru-the-core and millable PVC, aluminum or fiberglass.- Early buildings must use knobs on the exterior door hardware. Lever hardware may be used on the

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	<p>interior of the door but on the exterior only on portions of buildings that are constructed after 1900.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The door and trim of wood, solid-thru-the-core and millable PVC and fiberglass must be field painted. Aluminum storm doors may be factory finished. - Storm doors should be painted the same color as the existing main door and the storm door frame painted to match the existing door frame. <p><u>Automobile Garage doors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing overhead acting sectional doors for automobile garages constructed after 1970 may be replaced with high quality pressed steel (used beginning in the 1970s) or synthetic/composite doors provided they have a smooth or subtle wood grain finish and are field painted or factory finished a color which complements the body of the building). - Original, side hinged wood doors on early garages or sheds must be retained and repaired, or replicated in the original material and style.
Drainage*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Metal snow guards and metal ½ round or ogee gutters may be installed provided they are stylistically appropriate and the gutters and downspouts are located so as not to obscure or detract from architectural features. - The gutters/downspouts must be constructed of wood or metal, which may be painted or factory finished in a color to match the trim.
Utility meters: Electrical, gas, cables*~	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utility meters may be administratively approved on secondary wall elevations, and should be painted to match the adjacent surface.
Exhaust/supply fans/plumbing vents*~	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small vents measuring less than one square foot may be installed on secondary wall elevations or roofs, provided that they are painted to match the adjacent surface.
Fences/gates*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New interior side and rear yard fences/gates up to 6’ high and not facing a public street may be administratively approved if they meet zoning requirements (a plat is required to confirm compliance).

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fences which face a public or private street require Board approval and must be painted or stained. - Secondary wood fences which are located behind the main building in a rear yard or interior side yard may be constructed of stylistically appropriate unpainted wood or metal. Chain link, rustic stockade and hollow vinyl materials are not appropriate. (Stockade style fences are those which contain vertical rustic, half-round boards pointed at the top.)
HVAC*~	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimally visible ground mounted condenser units may be administratively approved in side and rear yards. - Architecturally appropriate screening may be required, depending on visibility.
Exterior lighting*~	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New light fixtures may be approved administratively provided that they are architecturally and historically appropriate in design and material. - Electric light fixtures may be converted to gas where historically appropriate, and vice versa.
Shutters*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where stylistically appropriate, new shutters may be administratively approved but must be operable (shutter dogs and hinges) and fit the opening of the window as described in the <i>Design Guidelines</i>. - Composite/synthetic shutters may be acceptable, depending on the age of the building (1970s or later), if they are constructed of a solid, millable material with a smooth or subtle wood grain surface, and are field painted. - Hollow vinyl or steel shutters are not permitted.
Siding & Trim*~	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The replacement siding policy expands upon the Board’s existing fiber cement policy, and past practice, as follows: - Existing early siding must be preserved wherever possible. - Where synthetic siding such as Insulbrick, Formstone, aluminum or vinyl, is proposed to be removed, and early siding is uncovered below, retention, repair and selective replacement of the early siding is required. Where staff finds in the field that the early siding is too damaged to be repaired, new siding must match the material, profile, exposure and texture of the early siding.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fiber cement siding and synthetic/composite trim may only be installed on buildings and additions constructed after 1975 and must have a smooth finish without a wood grain surface texture. - Synthetic/composite trim may be approved administratively only in certain limited locations on early buildings, such as the fascia board behind gutters or a water tables near grade, where wood trim is consistently susceptible to rot. - Replacement siding/trim over 100 square feet requires a building permit
Stoops/Steps & Railings*~	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New handrails may be administratively approved on existing stoops if they are visually minimal (post and rail without balusters) and constructed of metal or painted wood in a historically appropriate style.
Antennas*~	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Antennas not requiring an SUP may be approved administratively if they are mounted on a wall or are freestanding tripods on a flat roof set back a minimum of 10' from the building face. - Antennas may not project above the wall on which they are mounted and must be painted to match the adjacent wall surface. - Small dish antennas must be located in the least visible roof/wall location, not on a street façade, and be painted to match the adjacent material.

Authority

Under zoning ordinance section 10-109 & 10-209, historically appropriate repair and replacement of materials can be approved without the necessity of a Certificate of Appropriateness. Since 2009, Staff has been documenting projects falling under this provision through an Administrative Approval process (which includes a 2 page application and tracking through the City’s permit plan system).

Approvals

By past practice, some alterations do not require BAR or BAR Staff Administrative Approval, including: art, play equipment, paving not used for parking, landscaping plant materials, storm windows, and temporary or portable planters.