

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) is a seven-member citizen board appointed by City Council for four year terms. A member may serve three consecutive terms. All members must have an interest in, competence in, or knowledge of historic preservation. The ARB carries out its responsibilities through the process known as **design review**.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW

The Purpose of Design Review

City Council established the ARB with the stated purpose of protecting designated historic properties against destruction or encroachment of architecturally incompatible buildings and structures, including signs. Through the ARB, the City of Roanoke preserves buildings with historic character and encourages new design that is compatible with the old. The goals of design review by the ARB are:

- to ensure that work on historic buildings preserves architectural features and historic character,
- to pursue alternatives to demolition of important buildings, and
- to ensure that new construction is compatible with existing nearby and adjacent buildings.

The H-1 District design review guidelines are based upon the principles outlined in the *Secretary's Standards*, but address issues specific to Roanoke.

toric Buildings. First developed in 1979 and periodically updated, the *Secretary's Standards* include extensive information concerning

- maintenance,
- repair,
- selection and installation of replacement elements and materials,
- alterations and additions for historic buildings, and
- new construction in historic districts.

Rehabilitation according to the Secretary's Standards of an income-producing building carries the potential for tax credits. The City does not administer these credits, but encourages property owners to contact the National Park Service and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for more information.

Work Requiring Review

Three types of construction activities usually occur: preservation, rehabilitation, and new construction.

Preservation of a building means retaining the existing form, appearance, and materials of a building through stabilization, repair, and maintenance.

Rehabilitation of a building acknowledges the need to accommodate change to remain useful. Rehabilitation also preserves those features of historic or architectural value.

New construction affects the overall setting and environment of the historic district. Growth and change are a vital part of community development. Design review ensures that new buildings are compatible with existing buildings.

DEFINITIONS

Preservation: Measures taken to retain the existing form, features, and materials of a historic property.

Restoration: Returning the form, features, and character of a historic property to their appearance during an earlier period of time.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The most widely used standards and guidelines in the United States for the rehabilitation of buildings and new construction in historic districts are *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating His-*

In the H-1 Historic District, changes to be reviewed include:

- all exterior changes to existing buildings,
- painting a building a different color,
- new buildings/structures, including signs; awnings, light fixtures, and parking lots,
- additions to buildings, and
- demolition/moving of buildings or structures.

The H-1 District design standards supplement the requirements of the underlying zoning district. These additional standards emphasize retaining and restoring the architectural features of important buildings.

Certificate of Appropriateness

Before undertaking any of the reviewable changes listed above, property owners must first be issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) by the ARB. If a building permit is required, the COA issued in advance of obtaining the permit. The ARB evaluates each application on the basis of the effect the proposed action will have on the actual building, on adjacent properties, and on the entire district. In evaluating an application, the Board uses the design guidelines discussed in this publication.

Certificate of Appropriateness

Administrative Approval (Staff-Issued)

The review and approval of minor construction in the district has been expedited to assist property owners and contractors. Requests to the ARB for certain construction can be reviewed and approved in five to ten days instead of waiting for the Board's regular monthly meeting. Please contact the ARB Agent to discuss eligible requests for a staff-issued Certificate of Appropriateness.

Completed applications must include a drawing of the construction to be undertaken (design, dimensions, materials, and placement) and photographs of the property. Once submitted to the Roanoke Planning Division, the application will be re-

viewed using design guidelines in the city code and any adopted by the ARB. The applicant will be notified in writing of any decisions.

ARB Approval

All work in the H-1 District that is not in-kind repair or replacement, and not included on the list of items eligible for administrative approval, must apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness through the ARB. Property owners must complete the H-1 Application for Certificate of Appropriateness (same as for administrative approvals). Completed applications must include a drawing of the construction to be undertaken and photographs of the property, and address intended design, dimensions, materials, and placement.

Certificate of Appropriateness

Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness are submitted to the Roanoke Planning Division; the staff reviews each application for completeness prior to referring it to the ARB. Only applications that are complete and submitted before the deadline can be considered. Incomplete applications and late applications are referred to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

The complexity of a project determines whether an owner prepares the application or hires a professional to prepare and/or present the application. Complex projects involving new construction or major additions generally need professional assistance (property owners must still sign the application). Once a complete application is submitted to the Planning Division, it will be placed on the ARB's agenda for the next public meeting.

Board Meetings

The ARB meets on the second Thursday of each month. The filing deadline to be placed on the Board's agenda is three weeks prior to the meeting date. Applications and submission dates may be obtained from the Roanoke Planning Division.

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Applicants should plan to attend the ARB meeting, as this provides an opportunity for the applicant and/or authorized agent (typically an architect or contractor but always someone authorized to make binding decisions that may affect the cost or schedule of the project) to explain the project in greater detail, present drawings, and

answer questions from the ARB.

ARB meetings are open to the public and news media. The public is welcome to speak in support of or in opposition to the applications. Representatives of neighborhood and other groups frequently attend ARB meetings and sometimes comment on specific applications.

Applications must receive an affirmative vote from a majority of the Board members present at the meeting in order to be granted a Certificate of Appropriateness. If the application is denied, the applicant may appeal the ARB's decision to City Council.

If the application is approved, the ARB issues the applicant a Certificate of Appropriateness in the mail. The certificate is needed to obtain a building permit. For work not requiring a building permit, the approved certificate must be posted on site before any work can commence.