

Working with the ARB

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE H-2 DISTRICT

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 up to three consecutive terms. The ARB carries out its responsibilities through the process known as **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. The goals of design review by the ARB are:

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



Replacement in-kind and repair with matching design and materials is a key recommendation in design review.

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.

Soffit: Exposed undersurface of any overhead component of a building.

Design Review Process: Repair or Replace in-kind

In reviewing work in the H-2 Historic District, the ARB emphasizes repair and replacement in-kind rather than replacement with different materials or designs. Whenever possible, original building elements and details should be repaired using the same or similar materials. If such repair is not feasible, replacement should be in-kind or with materials that match the original as closely as possible in profile, dimensions, materials, and overall appearance. The ARB's review criteria are based on the review standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and, where applicable, its adopted Architectural Design Guidelines. The regulations encourage minimal alteration to existing buildings and new construction that enhances the visual and spatial qualities of the district.

The guidelines assist the applicant and the ARB in establishing acceptable construction decisions and methods. The review process involves three types of review: 1) In-Kind Replacement and Repair, 2) Administrative Approval (Staff Issued) Certificate of Appropriateness, and 3) ARB-Issued Certificate of Appropriateness.

In-Kind Replacement and Repair

Some construction can be undertaken without a Certificate of Appropriateness, such as ordinary maintenance and repair and replacement of certain features with the same design and materials. Examples include the replacement of wood soffits and wood floorboards with others of the same design and materials. Repair and replacement in-kind with the original materials and design is always the preferred method of renovation. . In order to make in-kind replacement and repair, owners should complete the H-2 District Application for in-kind replacement and repair.

It is the owner's responsibility to investigate all methods of repair and replacement in-kind before requesting full scale replacement with a different design or materials.

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 for such minor construction can usually 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.

To obtain an Administrative Approval Certificate of Appropriateness, owners should complete the H-2 Application for Certificate of Appropriateness. Completed applications must include drawings of the construction to be undertaken and photographs of the property, and must address intended design, dimensions, materials, and placement. Once submitted to the Planning Division, the application will be reviewed with at least one board member to insure that changes proposed adhere to the design guidelines. The applicant will be notified in writing of the decision of the Agent to the ARB. Work cannot begin until the Certificate of Appropriateness has been granted and is posted at the job site.

Certificate of Appropriateness - ARB Approval

All work in the H-2 District that is not considered an in-kind repair or replacement, and not included in the list of items eligible for administrative approval, must apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness through the ARB. Property owners must complete an H-2 Application for Certificate of Appropriateness (same as for administrative approvals).

Completed applications must include these items:

- drawings of the construction to be undertaken,
- photographs of the property, and
- Information about intended design, dimensions, and placement.

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 project complexity 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 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.

Architectural Review Board Meetings

The ARB meets on the second Thursday of each month. The filing deadline is three weeks prior to the meeting date. Applications and submission dates may be obtained from the Roanoke Planning Division, or from the ARB's website, www.roanokeva.gov/ARB. ARB Members and staff visit each site prior to the meeting.

Who should attend?

Although an agent or representative may present an application, applicants should plan to be present at the meeting. The ARB meeting provides an opportunity for the applicant or authorized agent to explain the project in detail, present drawings, and answer questions.

Typically, an authorized agent is an architect or contractor but may also be an attorney or anyone that the applicant has entrusted to present their application. It is imperative that someone authorized to make binding decisions that may affect the cost or schedule of the project be present at the meeting. If the applicant isn't present and questions arise that cannot be answered by the applicant's representative, the application will likely be continued for another month. Therefore, it is highly recommended that applicants attend ARB meetings even in cases where an agent or representative will present the application.

The ARB considers the effect the proposed action will have on the actual site where the work will occur and on adjacent and nearby properties, as well as its effect on the character of the entire district.

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.

Successful applicants usually:

- understand the history and important architectural features of their property,
- are familiar with the architectural design guidelines, particularly those sections related to the work they wish to undertake,
- contact the Agent (staff) to the ARB prior to submitting the application to discuss the proposed project and determine supporting documentation,
- when necessary, work with designers and contractors who have experience with historic properties, and submit legible applications with clear documentation.



All exterior work in the H-2 District requires an ARB Certificate of Appropriateness.

Building and Zoning Permits

Many projects undertaken in the H-2 District will require either a Zoning or Building Permit. Contact the Permit Center in Room 170 of the Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building to inquire if your project will require a permit, 540-853-1090.

NOTE: In the H-2 District, projects that include siding, windows, or roofing require a Building Permit, per Virginia state legislation.