

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND, REENACT AND RECODIFY THE SECTION 31A “HISTORIC PRESERVATION DISTRICTS” OF THE ARLINGTON COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE. THESE AMENDMENTS ARE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE COUNTY ARE CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT BEST PRACTICES, AND FOR OTHER REASONS REQUIRED BY THE PUBLIC NECESSITY, CONVENIENCE AND GENERAL WELFARE, AND GOOD ZONING PRACTICE.

Be it ordained that the County Board of Arlington County hereby resolves to amend, reenact and recodify Section 31A “Historic Preservation Districts” of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance. These amendments are recommended in order to ensure that historic preservation activities within the County are consistent with best current practices, and for other reasons required by the public necessity, convenience and general welfare and good zoning practice.

SECTION 31A. HISTORIC PRESERVATION DISTRICTS

The purpose of these regulations is to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the public through the identification, preservation, and enhancement of buildings, structures, landscapes, settings, neighborhoods, places and features with special historical, cultural, architectural and archaeological significance through the establishment of historic districts, and through the protection of other significant properties. To achieve these general purposes, the County seeks to take the following steps to preserve and protect buildings, structures and properties that serve as important visible reminders of the historic, cultural, architectural, and archaeological heritage of Arlington County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, or the United States of America:

1. Promote local historic preservation efforts through the identification and protection of historic resources throughout the County, and through the designation of local historic districts;
2. Assure that, within Arlington County's historic districts, new structures, buildings, additions, landscaping and related elements will be in harmony with their setting and environs;
3. Promote an enhanced quality of life within the County.
4. Maintain and improve property values by providing incentives for the upkeep, rehabilitation and restoration of older structures and buildings in a safe and healthful manner, and by encouraging desirable uses and forms of development that will lead to the continuance, conservation and improvement of the County's historic, cultural and architectural resources and institutions within their settings;
5. Encourage nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register; and
6. Promote tourism and enhance business and industry, through the protection of, and education about, historic, cultural and archaeological resources;

(Ord. No. 83-1, 1-8-83; Ord. No. 09-10, 12-12-09)

A. Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board.

1. Creation of Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board: There is hereby created and established an Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board which shall consist of no more than fifteen (15) members who are residents of the County who have an interest, competence, or knowledge of historic preservation and who shall be appointed by the County Board. The Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board shall be the architectural review board provided by Section 15.1-503.2 of the Code of Virginia. The Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board shall hereafter be referred to as "The Review Board."
2. Composition of the Review Board: The County Board shall select the members of the review board that meet the criteria set forth by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Certified Local Government (CLG) program. The County Board may consider including members from appropriate community groups (e.g. The Arlington Historical Society).

3. Terms of Office.
 - a. The members of the review board shall serve overlapping terms of four (4) years. Initially, four (4) members shall be appointed for a term of one (1) year, four (4) members shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years, four (4) members shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years, and three (3) members shall be appointed for a term of four (4) years. Thereafter, all appointments shall be made for a term of four (4) years. Where the County Board appoints fewer than fifteen (15) members, the number of appointees with each term length shall be reduced proportionally.
 - b. Members may be reappointed for consecutive terms.
 - c. If a member representing a profession designated as a requirement by the CLG program ceases to be a member of that profession, then that member will no longer be a member of the Review Board. If a vacancy occurs for any reason, including those noted above, then a new appointment shall be made by the County Board for the remainder of the unexpired term.
4. Organization; Officers; Rules; Meetings:
 - a. The Review Board shall annually elect from its membership a chairman and vice-chairman, at the first meeting held on or after December 1st in each calendar year, for a one year term of office. In the event such a person is unable to serve for the full term for any reason, a replacement shall be elected to serve for the remainder of the term.
 - b. The Review Board may establish any rules necessary for the orderly conduct of its business.
 - c. All meetings of the Review Board to the extent required by the Code of Virginia.

(Ord. No. 83-1, 1-8-83; Ord. No. 91-28, 7-30-91; Ord. No. 92-7, 4-4-92; Ord. No. 09-10, 12-12-09)

B. Responsibilities of the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board.

The function of the Review Board shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following activities:

1. Approve, deny, or approve with conditions Certificate of Appropriateness applications in accordance with the provisions of Subsection E.
2. Recommend additional surveys of potential historic districts, and recommend properties for designation as local historic districts, including recommending Historic District Design Guidelines for such districts.
3. ~~Approve, adopt, or amend Design Guidelines. Make such minor technical~~ administrative amendments to the design guidelines as are necessary for the orderly review of CoA applications in designated historic districts. Any administrative amendment to existing design guidelines which comply with the spirit of this Code, and the intent of the County Board in its approval of the underlying historic district design guidelines, may be approved by the HALRB. Those amendments may include but would not be restricted to the following: language on new building materials, construction methods and technologies.

updates to existing chapters and appendixes, revisions meant to take into account new County policies and changes to other sections of Code.

4. Act in an advisory role on historic preservation and historical affairs to the County Board, County Board appointed commissions and boards, and other groups.
5. Produce an annual report of the Review Board's activities.
6. Prepare, circulate, and approve text for local historic markers.
7. Organize, develop, and execute educational programs focusing on Arlington's heritage and local historic preservation efforts.
8. Undertake such responsibilities as the County Board may direct to protect historic properties.
9. Provide the County Board with assistance in the naming of public facilities and advice on other matters of historical value.

(Ord. No. 09-10, 12-12-09)

C. Establishment of Historic Districts. The Historic District (Overlay) is hereby established as an overlay district, meaning that this district is overlaid upon other districts and the land so encumbered may be used in a manner permitted in the underlying district only if and to the extent such use also complies within the regulations contained herein.

Additionally:

1. Nominations for inclusion within an historic district shall be made by referral to the Review Board. The Review Board shall have reason to believe that at least 2 of the 11 Qualifying Criteria are present prior to initiating its study of the nomination.
 - a. The owner of any property being considered for inclusion in an historic district shall be informed of the nomination within ten (10) business days of the receipt of a request for consideration via first class mail.
 - b. The Review Board shall base its decision upon studies, documentation and/or research, and shall prepare or cause to be prepared, a report on the historic significance of the proposed historic district.
 - c. The Review Board shall hold a public hearing to consider the historic district status after due notice has been given to the owners of all properties to be included in such district(s), and the civic association which includes the proposed district within its boundaries.
 - d. The Review Board shall not recommend designation unless it finds that at least two of the following Criteria 1 - 11 have been met. The Review Board retains the authority to not recommend designation even if the property does meet at least two of the criteria.
 - 1). The property is listed or is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places;
 - 2). The property has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the county, state, or nation;
 - 3). The property was the site of a significant local, state, or national

- event;
 - 4). The property is associated with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the county, state, or nation;
 - 5). The property embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, or method of construction;
 - 6). The property is identified as the work of a master builder, architect, or landscape architect;
 - 7). The property embodies elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship that render it structurally or architecturally significant;
 - 8). The property has a distinctive location, or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;
 - 9). The property is a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure representing a period or style in the commercial, industrial, or agricultural development of the county, with a high level of historic integrity or architectural significance;
 - 10). The property has the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the county, state, or nation; or
 - 11). The property is suitable for preservation or restoration.
- e. If the Review Board recommends designation, then written copies of the Review Board’s recommendation, including determinations of historical significance, and recommendations concerning the area to be included in the proposed historic district, shall be transmitted for review to the County Board.
- f. If the Review Board recommends designation of an historic district, it will forward, with such recommendation, proposed Historic District Design Guidelines for the district to be considered for adoption by the County Board. Provided, however, that the Review Board may recommend that the County Board consider designation of an historic district without proposed design guidelines upon a finding that taking time to develop such guidelines would present a substantial risk that historic resources proposed to be preserved by the designation would be damaged or destroyed. Where design guidelines are not proposed with a recommendation for designation, the Review Board shall recommend design guidelines for approval by the County Board at the earliest practicable date after designation.
- f. g. In the event that the Review Board does not recommend designation, the County Board, upon its own motion, may initiate the designation review process.
2. The County Board shall act on the recommendations in accordance with the normal zoning approval procedure as specified in the Code of Virginia. The designation of such an historic district shall be shown as an overlay on the map referred to in Section 2.C. of the Zoning Ordinance.

3. Upon adoption of the ordinance, the owners and occupants of each designated historic district shall be given written notification of such designation by the County Board.

(Ord. No. 83-1, 1-8-83; Ord. No. 89-4, 4-8-89; Ord. No. 09-10, 12-12-09)

D. Building or Altering in a District; Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA).

1. After the designation of an historic district, no exterior portion of any building or other structure (including walls, fences, light fixtures, steps and pavement, or other appurtenant features) nor aboveground utility structure nor any type of outdoor advertising sign shall be erected, altered, restored, moved or demolished within such district until after an application for a CoA has been submitted to and approved, in accordance with Subsection 31A.E below, by the Review Board or its designee, or, on appeal from a decision of Review Board, by the County Board as being architecturally or historically compatible with the historic district, buildings, or structures therein.
2. The CoA must be issued by the Review Board or its designee, or, on appeal, by the County Board prior to the issuance of a building permit (or other permit granted for purposes of constructing or altering structures).
3. A CoA shall be required regardless of whether or not a building permit is required.
4. The Review Board or, on appeal, the County Board shall not consider interior arrangement and shall take no action under this subsection except for the purpose of preventing the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, moving or demolition of buildings, structures, appurtenant fixtures, outdoor advertising signs or natural features in the historic district which would be incongruous with the historical aspects of the district.
5. Any CoA issued pursuant to this Section shall expire (12) months from the date of approval if the authorized work has not commenced if a building permit is not required. If a building permit is required, it must be diligently pursued by the applicant after the CoA approval.

(8-5-78; Ord. No. 83-1, 1-8-83; Ord. No. 89-4, 4-8-89; Ord. No. 09-10, 12-12-09)

E. Certificate Procedure; Notice; Reasons; Appeal.

1. All applications for Certificates of Appropriateness shall be submitted on forms specified by the County. When an initial determination has been made that the application is complete, then the application shall be forwarded to the Review Board. The Review Board may request additional information if needed.
2. The Review Board may authorize County Staff to issue Certificates of Appropriateness that meet certain standards. Staff may administratively issue Certificates of Appropriateness where the Review Board has specified:
 - a. the properties eligible for designee action;
 - b. the specific category of modifications for which the designee may grant a

- CoA; and
3. c. the standards the designee must use in deciding whether to issue the CoA. As part of the Certificate of Appropriateness review process, the Review Board may find that the proposed setback for buildings and structures is consistent with the existing streetscape and historic district guidelines even though such setback is inconsistent with the requirements of the underlying zoning district. When the Review Board makes this finding, the Zoning Administrator shall grant a modification to the underlying setbacks, unless such modification violates vision clearance requirements from Section 32.D.4.
 4. Prior to action on a CoA, the Review Board or, on appeal to the County Board as provided by paragraph E.12, below, the County Board shall give the applicant and other persons an opportunity to be heard after the following notice has been given:
 - a. A notice of the public hearing shall be published ten (10) days prior to the hearing date in a newspaper having general circulation in the County;
 - b. Notice shall be sent by first class mail to owner(s) of the property which will be the subject of the hearing and owner(s) of abutting property and property immediately across the street from the affected property, including any property which lies in an adjoining jurisdiction, at least ten (10) days prior to the public hearing;
 - c. The civic association representing the neighborhood where the affected property is located shall be notified in writing at least seven (7) days prior to the public hearing;
 - d. One (1) placard containing the public hearing notice shall be posted on the affected property and no fewer than four (4) placards shall be posted in the surrounding neighborhood at least seven (7) days prior to the public hearing.
 - e. If any setback modifications are requested as part of the CoA, that information should be included in all notices.
 5. The Review Board shall utilize the historic district design guidelines relevant to the specific historic district under consideration in their review of any application for alterations to an exterior feature and make a decision in accordance therewith. The design guidelines will guide and inform the decisions of the Review Board with regard to these exterior alterations. The design guidelines are for the benefit of the applicant as well as the Review Board ~~and shall not bind the County Board in its consideration of appeals under subsection 31A.E. 12 of this Ordinance.~~ ~~Design guidelines for an historic district may be established, amended, or updated by the Review Board. Nothing herein is meant to preclude the County Board from adopting historic district design guidelines and the Review Board shall not adopt guidelines that are inconsistent with County Board adopted guidelines.~~ Historic District Design Guidelines shall be adopted and amended by the County Board, with such minor ~~technical~~ administrative amendments or updates as may be approved by the Review Board.
 6. The design guidelines shall also describe which modifications, if any, can be administratively approved by its designee, and shall provide specific standards for such approval.

7. ~~Amendments or updates to existing design guidelines may be approved in the same manner as the original. All design guidelines established, adopted, or amended by either the County Board or the Review Board on or before May 22, 2010 shall be in full force and effect, as though adopted by the County Board in a manner consistent with this ordinance, until such time as the County Board, or the Review Board in the case of minor ~~technical~~ administrative amendments or updates, acts to amend them.~~
8. Design guidelines shall not be created, amended, or updated except after a public hearing.
9. For districts without approved design guidelines, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, or *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology Documentation* shall be used to guide the CoA review process as amended.
10. If the Review Board makes the findings called for in Subsection D1, or, after an appeal as provided in paragraph E.12, below, the County Board determines that the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration, moving or demolition is ~~architecturally or historically compatible with the historic districts, buildings, or structures therein~~ appropriate, it shall forthwith approve such application and shall issue to the applicant a CoA.
11. If the Review Board or, after an appeal as provided in paragraph E.12., below, the County Board determines that a CoA should not be issued, it shall forthwith notify the applicant of such determination, furnishing him a copy of the reasons therefore and the recommendations, if any, as appearing in the records of the Review Board.
12. Any person or persons jointly or severally aggrieved by any final decision of the Review Board under subsections 31A.D., or 31A.E., above, may, within thirty (30) days after the final decision, have the right of appeal ~~of that decision~~ to the County Board of Arlington County by filing a petition which shall stay the decision of the Review Board pending the outcome of the appeal, provided that such a petition shall not stay a decision which denies the right to raze or demolish a historic landmark, building or structure. The County Board may reverse or modify, in whole or in part, any decision it finds upon review to be contrary to law or that is arbitrary and constitutes an abuse of discretion, or it may affirm the decision of the board Review Board. ~~In considering an appeal, the County Board may, but shall not be required to, find that a decision of the Review Board is contrary to law or is arbitrary and constitutes an abuse of discretion or the decision is inconsistent with applicable Historic District Design Guidelines.~~ The County Board may also reverse or modify the decision of the Review Board where the decision is based upon elements of the design guidelines that were ~~approved or~~ amended solely by the Review Board after May 22, 2010 and the County Board finds that those elements are not consistent with the purpose and intent of the County Board adopted design guidelines, or of the historic district designation.
13. Any person or persons jointly or severally aggrieved by any final decision of the

County Board under subsections 31A.C., 31A.D., or 31A.E., above, may within thirty (30) days after the final decision have the right to appeal to the Circuit Court of Arlington County by filing a petition at law which shall stay the decision of the County Board pending the outcome of the appeal, provided that such a petition shall not stay a decision which denies the right to raze or demolish a historic building or structure within an historic district. The Circuit Court may reverse or modify, in whole or in part, any decision it finds upon review to be contrary to law or that is arbitrary and constitutes an abuse of discretion, or it may affirm the decision of the board.