

BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
Tuesday, March 10, 2026 @ 5:30 PM
Town Hall – 2nd Floor, East Conference Room

WORK SESSION AGENDA

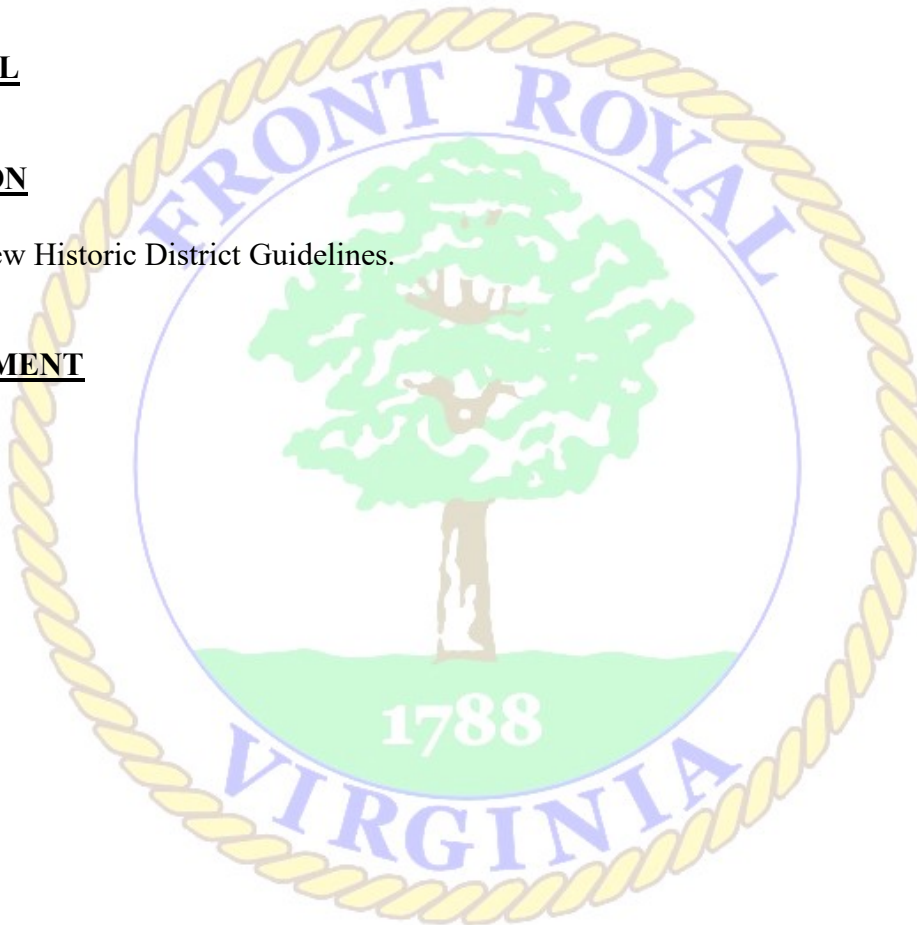
CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

DISCUSSION

- Review Historic District Guidelines.

ADJOURNMENT



HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES (2025 DRAFT)

Town of Front Royal, Virginia
Board of Architectural Review
Department of Planning & Zoning
102 East Main Street, Front Royal, VA 22630
540-635-4236

INTRODUCTION

The Historic Overlay District Design Guidelines are a supplementary set of standards to those outlined in the Town Code. They are used by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) in evaluating requests for demolition, new construction, major repairs, renovations, and signage in the Front Royal Historic District.

The BAR was created to safeguard the heritage of Front Royal by preserving buildings, neighborhoods, and places of historic and architectural significance. Its goal is to ensure that changes within the Historic District enhance, rather than diminish, its unique character.

These guidelines are intended to assist property owners, business owners, contractors, developers, real estate agents, and citizens in making decisions that will affect the character of the district. They also provide a framework for the BAR to apply consistent standards when reviewing applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (COA).

~~The BAR was created to safeguard the heritage of Front Royal by preserving buildings, neighborhoods, and places of historic and architectural significance. Its goal is to ensure that changes within the Historic District enhance, rather than diminish, its unique character.~~

AUTHORITY & LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The BAR's authority derives from Town Code §§175-82 – §175-98, consistent with Code of Virginia §15.2-2306. These Guidelines are used in conjunction with the Town's Zoning Ordinance and applicable building codes.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Within Front Royal's Historic District, all alterations, additions, and new construction shall protect and enhance historic character. This means that:

- Respecting Original Features: Historic materials, forms, and craftsmanship are to be preserved and maintained ~~wherever feasible~~, with repair preferred over replacement.
- Compatibility Without Imitation: New work shall be compatible in scale, massing, rhythm, materials, and details, but remain distinguishable as construction of its own time rather than attempting to create a false sense of age.
- Contextual Design: Proposed changes shall reinforce established patterns of streetscapes, lot configurations, and architectural forms that define the district.
- Sustainability and Continuity: ~~Interventions~~ All work shall extend the useful life of historic buildings, support sustainable building practices, and ensure that the historic district remains viable for future generations.
- Cultural and Economic Value: ~~Preservation~~ The BARs decisions shall recognize that the district's historic character is both a cultural resource and a driver of economic vitality through heritage tourism and reinvestment.

Commented [CP1]: Add “building” sustainable building practices

BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

(insert current BAR membership list here — this can be updated annually by staff)

STAFF DIRECTORY

(insert staff directory here, with Planning & Zoning Department contact information and any preservation planner assigned to BAR support)

HISTORIC CHARACTER AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN FRONT ROYAL

In Front Royal, “historic character” refers to the qualities that give the Historic District its distinct identity. This includes the architectural forms, materials, craftsmanship, and streetscapes shaped by the Shenandoah Valley’s history and the Town’s growth from the 18th century onward.

Commented [CP2]: Ms. Nash to research the timeframe of importance.

KEY COMPONENTS OF HISTORIC CHARACTER

- Architectural Form and Style: Two-story brick commercial blocks, Victorian-era residences, vernacular cottages, covered porches, and civic landmarks that embody the Town’s development as a railroad and river hub.
- Materials and Craftsmanship: Locally-fired-historic brick, Buckingham slate, limestone foundations, standing seam metal roof, and painted wood siding, and stucco that reflect both regional resources and traditional building practices.

• Setting and Context: Walkable Main Street blocks, John Marlow Plaza and the Town Gazebo, traditional lot patterns, and tree-lined streets and alleyways that together create a cohesive historic landscape.

• Cultural Associations: Connections to the Civil War, the New Deal Era, Creation of the National Park, the Shenandoah Valley's commercial and industrial heritage, and the lives of families and businesses that shaped Front Royal's identity.

Commented [CP3]: Mr. Cuddeback suggested additional bullets new deal era, and the creation of the National Park.

Commented [CP4]: Add a definition section Victorian, Vernacular, COA, New Deal Era,

WHY ~~IT~~ HISTORIC CHARACTER MATTERS IN FRONT ROYAL

Maintaining historic character:

- ~~Reinforces~~ Reinforces Front Royal's identity as a gateway to Skyline Drive and Shenandoah National Park.
- ~~Attracts~~ residents, businesses, and visitors who value authenticity and charm.
- Enhances economic vitality by supporting heritage tourism and protecting property values.
- Promotes sustainability by extending the life of existing buildings and reducing waste from demolition.
- Strengthens community pride and continuity by honoring Front Royal's layered history.

Commented [CP5]: Ellen ad language here from Louisiana historic magazine.

Guiding Principles

~~Within Front Royal's Historic District, all alterations, additions, and new construction shall protect and enhance historic character. This means that:~~

- ~~Respecting Original Features: Historic materials, forms, and craftsmanship are to be preserved and maintained wherever feasible, with repair preferred over replacement.~~
- ~~Compatibility Without Imitation: New work shall be compatible in scale, massing, rhythm, materials, and details, but remain distinguishable as construction of its own time rather than attempting to create a false sense of age.~~
- ~~Contextual Design: Proposed changes shall reinforce established patterns of streetscapes, lot configurations, and architectural forms that define the district.~~
- ~~Sustainability and Continuity: Interventions shall extend the useful life of historic buildings, support sustainable practices, and ensure that the historic district remains viable for future generations.~~

Commented [CP6]: Add terms in this paragraph to definitions.

~~• Cultural and Economic Value: Preservation decisions shall recognize that the district's historic character is both a cultural resource and a driver of economic vitality through heritage tourism and reinvestment.~~

Commented [CP7]: Waters this section is why we need a supplemental document.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Commented [CP8]: Begin Review 1-13-2026 BAR WS "Table of Contents"

1. Signs
2. Cornices & Roofing
3. Additions
4. Entrances, Porches & Doors
5. Windows
6. Masonry
7. Site Improvements
8. Wood
9. New Construction
10. Sustainability (New)
11. Accessibility (New)
12. Landscaping & Plantings (New)
13. Review Checklist
14. Map & Contacts

SIGNS

The sign standards in this chapter are in addition to Section 175-106 of the Town Code and require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

General Placement

Signs are an important part of commercial buildings in the Historic District. They provide identification, contribute to the character of the streetscape, and enhance the pedestrian experience. Signs should relate to the architecture of the building, fit within existing architectural features, and avoid obscuring details such as windows, cornices, or trim. On narrow streets like Main Street, projecting blade signs at the first-floor level are particularly effective for pedestrian visibility.

Standards:

- Signs shall ~~be compatible with~~ match the building architecture and the streetscape.
- Signs shall not obscure windows, cornices, or other architectural features.
- Signs shall be placed for pedestrian visibility and shall not exceed 15 feet above sidewalk grade or the bottom of second-floor windows.
- Projecting ~~blade~~ signs at the first-floor level are encouraged on narrow pedestrian streets.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] ~~Primary~~ Signage shall be scaled for legibility at walking pace rather than designed primarily for vehicular traffic.

Size

Signs ~~should~~ shall be appropriately scaled to their building. Signs that are too large overwhelm facades and create visual clutter, while signs that are too small may not effectively serve their purpose. A balance of proportion and legibility is essential.

Standards:

- Signs shall be proportional to the facade on which they are mounted.
- Wall-mounted signs shall not exceed one square foot per linear foot of building width.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] Projecting signs ~~generally~~ shall not exceed ~~12-16~~ 16 square feet in area. square feet in area.

Color

Commented [CP9]: Insert a photograph here at general placement. Use Honey and Hops sign

Commented [CP10]: Confirm 15 feet in the proposed ordinance. Staff needs to cross reference with the proposed sign ordinance.

Commented [CP11]: Confirm with town code size allowances.

Commented [CP12]: Wall mounted signs and projecting signs proportional.

Commented [CP13]: Add a link to town code regarding sign sizes

The color of a sign is an important design element that should complement the architecture of the building and the historic streetscape. Muted, neutral, and earth tones are most compatible. Brighter tones can provide emphasis but should be used sparingly. Fluorescent or highly reflective colors detract from historic character and are not appropriate.

Standards:

- Sign colors shall be compatible with the building and surrounding ~~streetscape, context.~~
- Brighter colors may be used as accents but shall not dominate the design.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] Fluorescent and highly reflective colors are prohibited.

Lighting

Lighting should illuminate the sign without overwhelming the building or streetscape. Fixtures should be appropriately scaled and designed to minimize glare. Historically compatible lighting methods such as gooseneck fixtures or concealed lighting are preferred. Internally ~~illuminated~~ plastic box signs are not appropriate in the Historic District.

Standards:

- Sign lighting shall be designed to minimize glare and light spill.
- Internally illuminated plastic box signs are prohibited.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] External gooseneck fixtures or concealed LED lighting are encouraged; exposed raceways and oversized fixtures are not appropriate. The light fixtures shall be just large enough to illuminate the sign and no more.

Materials

The choice of materials has a significant impact on how a sign contributes to the district. Durable, traditional materials such as painted wood, carved panels, and metal are preferred. Materials that appear temporary or inauthentic, such as vinyl or plastic, are not appropriate.

Standards:

- Signs shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] Preferred materials include painted or carved wood, metal, or composites that emulate traditional craftsmanship.
- Plastic or vinyl signs are discouraged.

Commented [CP14]: Include standards that references a foot candle and temperature. Overall warm color

Quantity

Commented [CP15]: Come back to this to match the proposed town code changes.

Limiting the number of signs per establishment helps reduce visual clutter and maintains the legibility of each building's facade. Window signs can be effective but should remain secondary to primary building-mounted signs.

Standards:

- Each establishment shall be limited to no more than two permanent exterior signs.
- Temporary window signs shall not cover more than 25% of a window.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] Window signs shall remain secondary in size to building-mounted identification.

Type of Signs

Not all sign types are appropriate for a historic district. Traditional sign types such as wall-mounted, projecting ~~blade~~-signs, and hand-painted ~~designs-signs~~ reinforce historic character. Monument signs may be used where space allows (per Town Code), but pylon or pole signs are incompatible with the historic setting.

Standards:

- Wall-mounted or projecting signs are generally appropriate.
- Freestanding monument signs may be permitted only where a substantial yard area exists.
- Pylon or pole signs and interior-illuminated plastic box signs are prohibited.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] Sandblasted wooden signs, hand-painted ~~well~~-signs, and artistic ~~blade-projecting~~ signs are encouraged where appropriate.

Content

While the BAR does not regulate the content of messages, signs that contain obscene, offensive, or misleading material undermine the integrity of the Historic District. At the same time, creative sign messages can enliven the streetscape and reflect the individuality of businesses.

Standards:

- Signs with offensive, obscene, or misleading content are prohibited.

- Creative sign messages are encouraged, provided they remain legible and compatible with the historic district.

Certificate of Appropriateness

To maintain consistency, all ~~permanent~~ exterior signs require approval through the Certificate of Appropriateness process. This ensures that signs contribute to the district's historic character while meeting regulatory requirements.

Standards:

- All ~~permanent~~ exterior signs shall require a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- Staff may approve compliant signs administratively; nonconforming proposals shall be reviewed by the BAR.

CORNICES & ROOFING

Cornices define the junction between roof and exterior wall, while roofs protect the building from weather and are critical to preserving historic structures. Both are highly visible and contribute significantly to the district's character. Their maintenance and repair are essential to ensure architectural integrity.

Cornices

Cornices and trim are vulnerable to water infiltration but are also among the most distinctive architectural details of historic buildings. Maintaining and repairing these elements preserves historic character and prevents costly structural problems. Replacement should only occur when elements are too deteriorated to repair, and then only with in-kind materials and details based on evidence.

Standards:

- Cornices shall be kept well sealed and anchored; gutters and flashing shall be maintained to prevent water intrusion.
- Cornices shall be repaired rather than replaced whenever feasible.
- Missing features such as brackets or blocks shall be replicated in-kind based on physical or documentary evidence.

• Replacement cornices shall match original materials, profiles, and decorative details when evidence exists.

• Replacement shall not convey a false historical appearance or introduce elements inconsistent with the building's original style.

Roofing

Historic roofing materials such as slate, standing-seam metal, and wood shingles are character-defining features. Their repair and maintenance prolong the life of the building and preserve historic authenticity. Where replacement is unavoidable, historically appropriate materials shall be used, or compatible alternatives considered. Roof-mounted equipment, skylights, and solar panels should be located to minimize their visibility from the public right-of-way.

Standards:

• Character-defining roof elements such as chimneys, skylights, dormers, and light wells shall be retained.

• When replacement is necessary, roofing shall match original materials where feasible (e.g., slate, standing-seam metal, historically appropriate wood shingles).

• Metal roofing shall be painted (except copper, which may remain unfinished) using primers appropriate to the metal type.

• Antennas, solar collectors, and mechanical equipment shall be placed on non-prominent roof areas to minimize visibility.

• New elements such as skylights or additional stories shall not be visible on primary elevations.

• [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] Artificial slate and high-quality standing seam metal may be acceptable alternatives where original slate is beyond repair, provided flashing and fasteners are verified before wholesale replacement.

ADDITIONS

Additions allow historic buildings to accommodate new uses and evolving needs while remaining viable over time. Well-designed additions should be subordinate to the original structure, compatible in scale and materials, and distinguishable as new construction. Poorly designed additions can overwhelm historic buildings, obscure original features, or create a false sense of history.

Location & Scale

Additions should be placed in locations that minimize their visibility from primary streets and should never visually dominate the original building. Rear or secondary elevations are preferred. When additions are visible, they should be designed under the same standards applied to new construction.

Standards:

- Additions shall be located on rear or secondary elevations whenever feasible.
- Additions shall be subordinate in size and scale to the original building.
- Additions placed on a primary elevation shall meet the standards for New Construction.

Design Compatibility

Additions should be compatible with the historic structure but remain distinguishable as new work. This ensures that the historic building retains its integrity while allowing for contemporary expression. Materials, roof forms, and details should complement but not replicate the original.

Standards:

- Additions shall be designed to be compatible in scale, massing, roof form, materials, and detailing.
- Additions shall not create a false historical appearance or introduce elements inconsistent with the original structure.

- Attachments shall be designed so that the essential form and integrity of the historic building would remain if the addition were removed (e.g., through offsets in wall planes or rooflines).

Use of Materials

The choice of materials in additions plays an important role in blending old and new. New materials may be introduced if they are compatible with historic fabric, but highly synthetic or temporary materials are not appropriate.

Standards:

- Additions shall use exterior materials that are compatible in appearance, scale, and finish with those of the historic building.
- New materials shall be of high quality and durable; imitative products that convey a false sense of history are not appropriate.

ENTRANCES, PORCHES & DOORS

Entrances and porches are often the most distinctive features of historic buildings, defining their style and contributing to the rhythm of the streetscape. These elements also serve as focal points

for both residential and commercial architecture. Retaining original entrances and porches preserves the character of the building and provides continuity within the district.

Maintenance & Repair

Regular inspection and maintenance of entrances, porches, and doors prevents deterioration and protects the building envelope. Repairing original features is preferred to replacement, as original details often cannot be replicated with modern materials.

Standards:

- Entrances, porches, and doors shall be inspected regularly for signs of deterioration, including rust, peeling paint, rot, open joints, or failing putty and caulk.
- Damaged elements shall be repaired in-kind wherever possible.
- Original hardware and locks of historic significance shall be retained and reused whenever feasible.

Replacement

Where deterioration is too severe for repair, replacement should match the original design as closely as possible, using documentation or physical evidence. Inappropriate replacements can erode historic character and diminish architectural integrity.

Standards:

- Entire porches or doors shall only be replaced when they are too deteriorated to repair.
- Replacement porches or doors shall match the original in design, materials, and details as closely as possible based on evidence.
- Decorative elements inconsistent with the building's architectural style shall not be introduced.

Alterations & Enclosures

Alterations to entrances and porches can significantly alter the character of a building. Enclosing porches may be appropriate on secondary elevations but generally compromises the appearance of primary façades. New primary entrances are rarely appropriate on principal elevations.

Standards:

- New primary entrances on principal elevations are prohibited unless clearly supported by historical evidence.

- Porches on primary elevations shall not be enclosed.
- Porch enclosures on secondary elevations may be permitted if they are designed to preserve the appearance and proportions of the original porch.

Storm & Screen Doors

Storm and screen doors can provide energy efficiency while preserving historic fabric if designed appropriately. Full-view storm doors are preferred because they allow the original door to remain visible. Colors and finishes should harmonize with adjacent trim or the primary door.

Standards:

- Storm and screen doors shall be painted or finished to match adjacent trim or the primary door.
- Full-view storm doors are encouraged.

Accessibility

Providing barrier-free access to historic buildings is important but must be balanced with preserving character-defining features. Accessibility improvements should be designed to be reversible and placed on secondary elevations whenever possible.

Standards:

- Accessibility features such as ramps or lifts shall be designed and located to minimize impact on character-defining entrances.
- Barrier-free access solutions shall be reversible whenever possible.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] Permanent ramps or lifts shall be located on secondary elevations when practicable and designed to harmonize with building materials.

WINDOWS

Windows are among the most important character-defining features of historic buildings. They shape the proportions of facades, provide rhythm to the streetscape, and often embody craftsmanship that cannot be replicated today. Retaining original windows preserves both the architectural integrity of the building and the overall character of the district.

Maintenance & Repair

Historic windows are often constructed of old-growth wood that is more durable than modern replacements. With regular maintenance—such as painting, glazing, and weather-stripping—original windows can last indefinitely. Repairs are often more cost-effective and sustainable than full replacement.

Standards:

- Original windows shall be retained and repaired whenever feasible.
- Windows shall be maintained in operable condition, with sound caulk, putty, and glazing.
- Repairs may include patching, splicing, consolidation, or in-kind replacement of deteriorated parts.

Replacement

Where windows are too deteriorated for repair, replacements should match the original in size, configuration, and materials. Inappropriate replacements can diminish the architectural integrity of the building. Non-original or modern windows that do not fit the building may be replaced with more compatible designs.

Standards:

- Replacement windows for historic structures shall match the original in material, profile, muntin/mullion dimension, and operation.
- Non-original windows may be replaced with context-appropriate designs (such as 2/2 or 2/1 sash where historically documented).
- Cutting new openings or blocking existing ones on primary elevations is prohibited.

Thermal Efficiency

Energy performance can be significantly improved without replacing original windows. Weather-stripping, storm windows, and interior shades offer effective solutions. Installing storm windows properly ensures they do not obscure or damage the original sash.

Standards:

- Windows shall be improved for thermal efficiency through methods such as weather-stripping, storm windows, and interior shades.
- Storm windows shall be installed so they do not obscure or damage historic sash, frames, or trim.
- Replacement for energy efficiency alone, without evidence of deterioration, is not appropriate.

Shutters

Shutters can enhance historic character where they are historically appropriate. They should be sized to match the opening, mounted on hinges, and appear operable. Inappropriate decorative shutters compromise authenticity.

Standards:

- Shutters shall only be used where evidence supports their historic use.
- Shutters shall be mounted on hinges and sized to cover the opening if closed.

Glass & Tinting

The type of glazing contributes significantly to the appearance of a window. Reflective or tinted glass alters the character of a façade and detracts from historic authenticity.

Standards:

- Glass in replacement windows shall be clear or lightly tinted to resemble traditional glazing.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] Darkly tinted or mirrored glass is prohibited on primary elevations.

MASONRY

Masonry, including brick, stone, and stucco, is a defining material in the Historic District. The texture, color, and craftsmanship of historic masonry walls contribute significantly to the district's character. Proper maintenance ensures durability, while inappropriate cleaning or repairs can cause irreversible damage.

Maintenance & Cleaning

Most masonry problems result from water infiltration. Proper drainage and maintenance help prevent deterioration. Masonry should be cleaned only when necessary, using the gentlest means possible, as harsh cleaning methods can permanently damage surfaces. Waterproof coatings, including latex and oil based paints, and sandblasting are particularly destructive and should be avoided.

Standards:

- Masonry features such as walls, cornices, surrounds, steps, and columns shall be retained and preserved.
- Drainage around foundations and walls shall be maintained to prevent water accumulation.
- Waterproof or non-breathable coatings that trap moisture are prohibited.
- Cleaning masonry shall be undertaken only when necessary, using low-pressure water, mild detergents, and natural bristle brushes.
- Sandblasting, high-pressure washing, or harsh chemical cleaners are prohibited.

Repointing

Mortar joints are critical to the performance and appearance of masonry walls. Using the wrong mortar can accelerate deterioration of brick and stone. Repointing should use mortar that matches the historic material in strength, color, texture, and tooling. Hard, modern mortars such as portland cement-rich mixes can damage softer historic masonry.

Standards:

- Deteriorated mortar shall be removed carefully by hand tools to avoid damaging surrounding masonry.

- Replacement mortar shall duplicate the original in strength, composition, color, texture, and tooling.
- Mortar joints shall be cut to a depth of approximately twice the width of the joint or 1 inch before repointing.
- Lime-rich mortars are required for older brick; mortars harder than the historic masonry are prohibited.

Painting & Stucco

Unpainted masonry was historically intended to remain exposed. Painting or coating such surfaces can trap moisture and accelerate decay. Where masonry has already been painted, repainting with breathable finishes may be necessary. Stucco may be appropriate in limited cases if historically documented.

Standards:

- Unpainted masonry shall remain unpainted where feasible.
- Where previously painted, loose paint shall be removed by hand scraping to the next sound layer.
- Painted masonry shall be repainted with breathable masonry paint systems only after proper surface preparation and drying time.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] Synthetic stucco systems may be considered only on a case-by-case basis and only where compatible with historic character.

SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Site improvements such as driveways, parking, walks, outbuildings, fences, and landscaping help define the setting of historic properties. These features contribute to the district's character and should be designed in a manner that complements historic buildings while minimizing visual impacts.

Driveways, Parking & Walks

The placement and design of driveways and parking areas can have a significant effect on historic character. Parking should not dominate the view of historic buildings, and historic paving materials should be preserved whenever possible. New paving should be compatible with traditional materials and avoid the appearance of large expanses of concrete.

Standards:

- Driveways are most appropriate on medium or large lots and shall be avoided where they visually dominate small or narrow lots.
- New parking areas shall be located to the sides or rears of buildings and shall be screened with landscaping or compatible walls/fences if visible.
- Historic paving materials such as brick, limestone, or patterned concrete shall be retained and repaired in-kind.
- New paving shall be compatible in color and texture with historic materials; large expanses of bright white or gray concrete are prohibited.
- Demolition of historic structures to create parking is prohibited.

Garages, Outbuildings & Site Features

Historic garages, sheds, and other site features are often overlooked but contribute to the overall setting. When new outbuildings are introduced, they should be subordinate in scale and compatible in materials, roof forms, and placement.

Standards:

- Historic outbuildings and significant site features shall be retained and preserved.
- New outbuildings shall be compatible in materials, roof slope, and scale with the primary building.
- New outbuildings shall be located to the rear or behind the front center line of the house.
- The scale of new outbuildings shall not overpower the primary structure or lot.

Fences & Walls

Fences and walls define property boundaries, provide screening, and shape the streetscape. Traditional materials such as brick, stucco, wood, and iron reinforce historic character, while chain-link or concrete block walls detract from it. The design, placement, and height of fences should respect prevailing patterns on the street.

Standards:

- Traditional fences, walls, and hedges shall be retained and preserved.
- Where replacement is necessary, fences and walls shall match original height, detail, and materials.
- New fences and walls shall respect prevailing patterns on the street and shall not introduce front yard fences where open yards predominate.
- Appropriate materials include brick, stucco, iron, wood, and hedges.
- Chain-link fences and concrete block walls are prohibited where visible from public ways.
- Fence and wall height shall be consistent with surrounding properties and zoning requirements.
- Solid masonry walls that visually enclose open streetscapes are prohibited.
- All fences in the Historic District require a Certificate of Appropriateness and a zoning permit.
- Larger retaining walls also require a building permit in addition to the Certificate of Appropriateness and zoning permit.

WOOD

Wood is one of the most common materials used in historic buildings for siding, trim, windows, and decorative details. Its versatility and workability made it the material of choice for builders throughout Front Royal's history. Regular maintenance is essential to protect wood from water damage and pests, while repairs should prioritize retaining original material whenever possible.

Maintenance & Preparation

Wood requires routine care to remain durable. Proper painting, caulking, and drainage extend its life, while poor maintenance can lead to rot and costly replacements. Surface preparation should be gentle to avoid damaging historic fabric. Harsh methods such as sandblasting or power washing destroy protective surfaces and accelerate deterioration.

Standards:

- Wood features shall be maintained free of water infiltration, pests, and vegetation.
- Paint and primer shall be maintained in sound condition to protect surfaces.
- Vegetation in contact with wood shall be removed, and joints prone to moisture infiltration shall be caulked with high-quality sealants.
- Surface preparation shall be limited to hand-scraping and sanding; destructive methods such as sandblasting, high-pressure washing, or open-flame burning are prohibited.
- Removal of paint to bare wood shall occur only where necessary to ensure adhesion of new paint.

Repair & Replacement

Historic wood can often be repaired using patching, splicing, or epoxy consolidation rather than full replacement. When replacement is unavoidable, new elements should match the original in material, profile, and detail. Modern substitute materials may be acceptable if they replicate historic appearance and proportions without creating a false sense of history.

Standards:

- Deteriorated wood elements shall be repaired using epoxies, dutchman patches, or in-kind replacement where feasible.
- Replacement of wood elements shall occur only where components are too deteriorated to repair.
- Replacement elements shall match the original material, design, dimensions, and details.
- [ADDED – Warrenton Integration] Modern composites or PVC may be considered on a case-by-case basis, provided they are visually compatible and replicate historic profiles.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

New buildings in the Historic District should enhance the character of their surroundings without imitating historic structures. They should be compatible in scale, massing, materials, and rhythm while remaining distinguishable as products of their own time. Successful new construction reinforces the historic streetscape and respects established patterns without resorting to mimicry.

Foundation & Materials

Foundations and exterior materials play an important role in visually grounding new construction within the historic district. Materials should reflect traditional character while being durable and high quality. Synthetic sidings often lack the scale and texture appropriate for historic settings.

Standards:

- Foundations of new buildings shall be differentiated using materials, patterns, or textures consistent with district context.
- Materials and textures shall be compatible with neighboring historic buildings.
- Brick and traditional wood siding are most appropriate for residential infill.
- On large facades, primary elevations shall be articulated into bays or planes, and varied materials, shades, or textures are encouraged.
- Vinyl, aluminum, and synthetic stucco finishes are prohibited on primary elevations.

Orientation, Height, Width & Massing

New construction should follow the established orientation and setbacks of the street. The height, width, and overall massing should reinforce the human scale and patterns of the district, avoiding buildings that are either oversized or underwhelming. Roof forms should reflect those commonly found in the district.

Standards:

- New buildings shall follow the orientation and front setbacks of surrounding buildings.
- Height and width of new buildings shall be consistent with prevailing patterns on the street.
- New construction shall reinforce human scale through porches, storefronts, entrances, and decorative features.

- Roof forms shall reflect district patterns (e.g., hipped, gable, cross-gable, gambrel) with historically appropriate pitches.

- Flat or shallow-pitched roofs are generally prohibited in residential areas.

Roofing & Openings

Roofs and openings shape the visual rhythm of the streetscape. Traditional roofing materials such as metal or slate complement historic buildings, while inappropriate glazing can disrupt architectural coherence. Openings should follow established rhythms and proportions.

Standards:

- Roofs shall use traditional materials such as metal, slate, or darker textured asphalt designed to resemble slate or wood.
- Roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened from public view with materials consistent with the building design.
- Windows and doors shall be proportioned and spaced consistent with surrounding historic buildings.
- Darkly tinted or mirrored glass on primary elevations is prohibited.
- Multi-paned windows, if used, shall be true divided lights or high-quality simulated divided lights with exterior muntins.

Porches

Porches are a traditional feature of residential architecture in Front Royal and contribute to the pedestrian-friendly character of the district. Their inclusion in new residential buildings helps reinforce continuity and rhythm.

Standards:

- Porches or analogous entry forms shall be incorporated into residential infill to reflect the historic character of the district.

SUSTAINABILITY (NEW)

Sustainability practices can extend the useful life of historic buildings, reduce operating costs, and improve comfort without compromising historic character. Thoughtful integration of energy-efficient systems and materials supports environmental goals while preserving the cultural and architectural integrity of the district.

Energy Efficiency

Improving energy performance in historic buildings is best achieved through sensitive retrofits that respect historic materials and features. Weather-stripping, insulation, and storm windows are often more effective and less intrusive than wholesale replacement of original elements.

Standards:

- Renovations and new construction shall incorporate energy-efficient measures where compatible with historic character.

- Historic features such as windows and doors shall not be replaced solely for energy efficiency; performance upgrades such as storm windows and weather-stripping are preferred.

Renewable Energy Systems

Solar panels and other renewable energy systems can support sustainability goals when carefully sited. Placement on less visible roof slopes or secondary elevations reduces visual impacts. Materials and finishes should minimize glare and blend with roof surfaces.

Standards:

- Solar panels and collectors shall be placed on non-character-defining roof planes, rear slopes, or secondary elevations wherever feasible.
- Frames and supports for solar installations shall be low-profile and non-reflective.
- Roof-mounted equipment shall be screened or placed to minimize visibility from public rights-of-way.

Materials & Resources

Using high-quality, durable, and responsibly sourced materials reduces long-term environmental impacts. Reuse of existing materials and incorporation of recycled products help preserve resources and maintain character.

Standards:

- Durable, long-lasting materials compatible with historic character shall be used for renovations and new construction.
- Use of reclaimed or recycled materials is encouraged when visually compatible with the district.
- Materials that create a false sense of history or compromise the durability of the building are prohibited.

ACCESSIBILITY (NEW)

Accessibility improvements allow historic buildings to remain usable and inclusive for all members of the community. While compliance with modern accessibility standards is essential, it must be achieved in a manner that respects and preserves character-defining features of historic structures.

General Approach

Accessibility can often be provided through reversible solutions that minimize alteration of historic fabric. When permanent modifications are necessary, they should be located and designed to reduce visual impacts on primary façades. Collaboration with preservation staff and code officials can help balance accessibility needs with preservation requirements.

Standards:

- Compliance with accessibility codes shall be achieved in a manner that preserves character-defining features.
- Accessibility solutions shall be designed to be reversible wherever feasible.
- Permanent ramps, lifts, or other accessibility features shall be located on secondary elevations whenever practicable.

Design of Ramps & Lifts

When ramps or lifts are required on historic buildings, their design should be simple, compatible, and constructed of durable materials. They should harmonize with the building's appearance without creating a false historic impression.

Standards:

- Ramps, lifts, and related elements shall be designed to harmonize with the building through appropriate use of materials and scale.
- Handrails, guards, and landings shall be simple in design and avoid faux-historic detailing.
- Barrier-free access features shall not obscure or damage character-defining features of entrances or porches.

LANDSCAPING & PLANTINGS (NEW)

Landscaping and plantings contribute to the overall character of the Historic District by shaping the setting, enhancing streetscapes, and framing historic buildings. Thoughtful design can strengthen continuity, preserve historic views, and maintain the sense of place that defines Front Royal's historic core.

Landscape Character

Front Royal's historic streetscapes are defined by mature trees, traditional lot patterns, and open front yards. Landscaping should enhance these qualities rather than obscure or compete with them. New plantings should be selected for their compatibility with historic settings and their ability to reinforce the district's character.

Standards:

- Landscaping shall complement the historic character of the property and district.
- Landscaping shall not obscure primary façades or character-defining features.
- Mature trees and historically significant plantings shall be preserved whenever possible.
- Replacement plantings shall use appropriate canopy trees and species compatible with the historic setting.

Plant Selection

Plant species should be chosen with attention to historical precedent, climate adaptability, and long-term sustainability. Invasive or inappropriate species can disrupt both the ecological balance and the historic character of the district.

Standards:

- Plant species shall be native or historically appropriate to the region.
- Invasive species are prohibited.
- Decorative plantings shall be designed to complement rather than compete with historic architecture.

Fences & Walls

Fences and walls are integral landscape features that define property boundaries and frame historic buildings. Their design and materials should follow established patterns and avoid introducing incompatible modern types.

Standards:

- Fences and walls shall be consistent with the district's fence and wall standards.
- Chain-link fencing is prohibited where visible from public rights-of-way.
- Fence and wall designs shall respect prevailing patterns in height, transparency, and material.

REVIEW CHECKLIST

The Review Checklist provides criteria for evaluating applications for Certificates of Appropriateness. These considerations help ensure that proposed changes are consistent with the historic character of the district while allowing for necessary evolution and adaptation.

Evaluation Criteria

When reviewing applications, the BAR will evaluate proposals based on their impact on historic character, architectural integrity, and compatibility with surrounding properties. The checklist provides a structured approach for decision-making and ensures consistency across reviews.

The BAR will consider the following:

- The historic and architectural value and significance of the structure and its relationship to surrounding buildings.
- The age, character, condition, and expected life of the structure, as well as the appropriateness of proposed changes to its period(s) of significance.
- The compatibility of the site plan, exterior design, arrangement, textures, and materials with the district.
- The views from public streets and ways, present and future.
- The character of the setting and surroundings of the property.
- The probable effects of the proposal on trees, wooded areas, or historic sites.
- The other pertinent factors, including aesthetic compatibility.
- The appropriateness of exterior features with respect to design, form, proportion, scale, mass, and configuration.

Guiding Standards

In addition to local criteria, the BAR is guided by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. These ensure consistency with best practices and prevent imposition of arbitrary design preferences.

Standards:

- The BAR shall be guided by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in all reviews.

- The BAR shall not impose or require adherence to any specific architectural style.

MAP & CONTACTS

Maps and contact information are included to assist property owners, architects, and contractors in navigating the Certificate of Appropriateness process. While maps provide a visual reference for the boundaries of the Historic District, contact details connect applicants with local and state resources for technical assistance and regulatory guidance.

Map

The Historic District map illustrates the boundaries within which these guidelines apply. The map should be consulted by property owners and applicants early in the planning process to confirm whether a project falls within the review area.

Standards:

- 894 • A current map of the Historic District shall be included in the published guidelines.
- 895 • The map shall be maintained by the Department of Planning & Zoning and updated as
- 896 necessary to reflect district boundary changes.

897

898 Contacts

- 899 •

DRAFT