



**TOWN OF ABINGDON, VIRGINIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
REVIEW BOARD WORK SESSION
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2024 –
4:00 P.M.**

**WORK SESSION – ARTHUR CAMPBELL
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 133 W. MAIN STREET
CONTACT: GABRIEL CRISTOFARI
email: gcristofari@abingdon-va.gov
Phone: 276-628-3167**

Welcome to the Town of Abingdon’s Historic Preservation Review Board Regular Meeting. This is a citizen Board, appointed by the Town Council, to interpret and uphold Abingdon’s Historic Preservation Ordinance, which is Chapter 44, Section 2-4 of the Abingdon Zoning Ordinance that protects the Historic District of Abingdon which has been designated the Old and Historic District along with all its contributing resources, including buildings, structures, and sites from negative encroachment resulting from inappropriate construction, design, alterations, or demolitions. Our review process is guided by our Design Review Guidelines, which are based on the United States Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

Our aim on this Board is to provide a positive bridge between the design review process and property owners seeking to make changes, working together through the natural partnership that exists between us for mutual good. The result will be to ensure Abingdon’s Historic District continues as a valuable asset and one that makes Abingdon a good place to live, work, and visit.

We appreciate your interest, and we encourage public participation in our meeting. Your comments are important to our decision making process. Anyone addressing the Board will approach the podium, identify your first and last name and give your complete mailing address.

- A. WELCOME – Betsy White**
- B. ROLL CALL – Gabriel Cristofari, Senior Planner/GIS**
- C. WORK SESSION DISCUSSION TOPICS**
 - 1. Updating Design Review Guidelines**

- **Site & Landscape Features**
 - **Driveways**
 - **Fences**
 - **Garbage Receptacles**
 - **Mechanical Systems**
 - **Landscape Lighting**
 - **Retaining Walls**
 - **Telecommunication Equipment**
 - **Sidewalks**
 - **Swimming Pools**
 - **Yard Features**

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

E. OLD BUSINESS/MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

F. ADJOURNMENT

Site Elements

General Fences & Retaining Walls in General

- a. ~~Fences and walls constructed of wood, masonry, wrought or cast iron or other original fence and wall material should be preserved and not removed or replaced.~~
- b. ~~If original or existing fence or wall material is deteriorated beyond repair, replacement must match the material, height, and detail of the existing.~~
- c. ~~New fences and walls should be constructed of pressure-treated wood, masonry, wrought or cast iron~~ -and may be added to buildings if appropriate to the architectural period and style of the construction and in some instances may be appropriate for buildings of later vintage.
- d. ~~New fence and wall materials and design should relate to those found in the neighborhood unless historical documentation proves otherwise.~~
- e. Chain link fences, ~~vinyl/PVC fences,~~ concrete block fences and fences of louvered, basket weave, horizontal board, stockade or shadowbox design are not ~~acceptable appropriate.~~
- f. ~~Free-standing brick f~~Fences that obstruct visibility of the primary building are not acceptable in front yards but may be installed in rear or side yards.
- g. ~~New fence and wall materials and design should relate to those found in the neighborhood. In general, fences and walls should be constructed of wood, masonry, or iron.~~
- h. ~~New fences and walls may be constructed on the property line or anywhere on the property; however, avoid creating areas that are inaccessible for maintenance or prone to overgrowth.~~
- i. Traditional plantings such as hedges and shrubs are acceptable alternatives ~~for fences.~~

Fences in the Front Yard Fences

- a. Fences of cast iron or wood pickets, balusters or spindles are appropriate for front yards and should be painted or stained an opaque color. ~~Solid board fences that obstruct visibility of the historic premises are not appropriate for use in front yards.~~
- b. The open space between ~~the pickets or~~ balusters should be no greater than 4 inches and be set between a top rail and a bottom baseboard and rail. If the ~~wood~~-pickets or balusters are more than 50% open, the height of the fence should not exceed 42 inches. If the wood pickets or balusters are 50% open or less, the height of the fence should not exceed 36 inches. However, if there is evidence to show that a fence of construction contrary to such limitations formerly existed, any new fence should be constructed in accordance with the available evidence.

Fences in the Rear Yard Fences

- a. Low, decorative fence design specified in [fences and retaining walls in general Design Review Guideline #12](#) is appropriate for rear yard fences and should be painted, stained, or left natural. Fences which enclose the rear yard for security, privacy and/or restricting pets are also acceptable at this location. Single row privacy fences of vertical flat top boards or planks are the most appropriate for the Old and Historic District, and boards or planks topped with a lattice or picket design are also acceptable.
- b. Privacy fences should be no greater than 6 feet in height and set back from the front of the house at least [halfway halfway](#) back on its side dimension.

Retaining Walls

- a. Retaining walls of concrete original to the property or built before 1945 should be preserved and maintained. Retaining walls built before 1945 should not be removed or replaced with new materials.
- b. Retaining walls of new construction should be of smoothed concrete or in stone designs such as cut stone, random rubble, coursed rubble or cobblestones.
- c. Retaining walls of artificial stone should not be constructed at the front of buildings. Retaining walls not exceeding three feet in height may be constructed of artificial stone in the rear of buildings.
- d. Retaining walls of brick are less appropriate but may in some instances be constructed.
- e. Retaining walls of timbers, or railroad ties are not [permitted appropriate](#).

Maintenance And Repair of Fences & Retaining Walls

- a. [Where fences are missing portions, design new fencing that matches or blends with the old in material, height, and detail if possible.](#)
- b. [When repairing wood fences, match the existing design when replacing component parts.](#)
- c. [If painted, keep wood fences well painted and maintained and match existing design when replacing pickets. Pressure-treated wood will need to weather for a period of time prior to painting.](#)
- d. [Paint and repair iron/metal fences on a regular basis or as needed](#)
- e. [Replace missing stones or bricks with stones or bricks that match the existing as closely as possible. Replacement brick should match the existing in dimension, color, texture, and hardness.](#)
- f. [Repoint masonry walls as needed, being careful to match mortar to the existing, including composition, hardness, texture, and color, and width, depth, and strike pattern \(if there is one\) of the existing mortar joint. Bricks and mortar need to be of the same relative hardness, so when they](#)

expand and contract during freeze/thaw cycles, they do so at the same rates and do not damage each other.

g. Keep landscaped fence lines trimmed and free from weeds and trees that may uproot or otherwise damage the landscaping.

h. Keep plants away that may uproot posts.

Yard Features ~~such as~~ (Pergolas, Gazebos and Fountains)

a. These yard features should generally be sited in rear or side yards.

b. Pergolas and gazebos should ~~be compatible with the design of the primary building on the site. This includes such elements as roof slope and materials selection. be of wood construction and have pre-1945 building design consistent with the architectural style of the building~~

c. If constructed of materials such as glass, metal or brick, these features may be placed near the rear of the lot if effectively screened by fencing or landscaping.

d. Prefabricated yard structures are discouraged. Although screening may be considered as a mitigating factor for the installation of these structures, they will still be reviewed for compatibility.

e. Composite materials with smooth finishes and paintable surfaces will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Vinyl plywood siding or trim is not appropriate for use.

Swimming Pools

a. Swimming pools should be located in rear or side yards and screened from public view by fencing or landscaping.

Lighting within Landscaping

Fixtures illuminating landscaping should be recessed at ground level or hidden from public view.

~~b. A series of small fixtures lining a walkway or driveway is not recommended.~~

HVAC Equipment

a. New units or existing units when replaced or upgraded should be placed in side or rear yards to minimize any visual impact. Side yard units should be set back as far from the front of the building as possible.

b. Rooftop units should be located so that they are minimally visible from the public right-of-way. Fencing or screening is required where units will be visible.

c. HVAC equipment installed on the ground should be appropriately screened with fencing or vegetation.

d. Exhaust vents or fans should be installed where their visibility is minimized and has the least impact on historic materials.

e. For commercial buildings with limited site space, place mechanical units on sections of the roof that are not visible from public rights-of-way if possible and screen the units as necessary.

Other Mechanical Systems

a. Exterior mechanical equipment should be located out of the public view, preferably ~~in~~ at the rear of buildings. All locations should be screened with shrubbery or fencing.

b. ~~Electrical conduits,~~ Gas meters, cable TV connections, DBS satellite dishes and similar equipment may likewise be located on the rear or sides of buildings if out of the public view and behind appropriate screening.

c. Electrical conduits should be within the walls of the building and not run along any building façade within view of the public. If necessary, conduits should be on the rear or sides of buildings if out of the public view, hidden behind appropriate screening, or painted to blend in with the building façade.

Telecommunication Equipment

a. Telecommunication equipment should not be installed at the front of the building, within front yards or in ~~side yards,~~ or on roofs visible ~~within~~ from the public ~~view~~ right-of-way.

b. Telecommunication equipment should be in the least visually obtrusive location on the property.

~~bc.~~ Telecommunication equipment should be of the smallest practical size available and if ground mounted, placed as close to the ground as possible and screened with landscaping, square lattice panels or fencing.

d. If satellite dishes must be attached to a building, they should be attached in a way that is easily reversible and avoids damage to historic building material. Attachment to historic masonry is specifically discouraged. If necessary, attachments should be made through the mortar joints, not the bricks themselves.

Garbage Receptacles

a. Except as permitted by the Town for periodic collection on the streets, garbage receptacles such as large dumpsters and trash containers should be situated at the rear of a building and fully screened from the public ~~view right-of-way. by shrubbery or fencing.~~

b. For residential properties, pressure treated wooden privacy fencing with vertically oriented boards either left natural, stained, or painted is recommended for screening.

c. For commercial properties, pressure treated wooden privacy fencing with vertically oriented boards either left natural, stained, or painted, a masonry enclosure of brick or stone is recommended for screening.

Driveways, Parking Lots and Paving

a. Driveways should not be replaced but repaired as needed, adhering to original design, materials and placement. Driveways and parking lots should be constructed of brick, concrete, narrow strip tracks of concrete, brown pea gravel or brown pea gravel embedded in asphalt (tar-in-chip) or pea gravel secured with an appropriate proprietary system. Asphalt may be considered as an alternative material in areas of steep grade.

b. Parking areas for private use should be located in the rear yard of the premises at a location near ~~er~~ any existing alley than the principal building. If in the public view, such parking areas should be screened with hedges, shrubs, ~~or~~ fences, masonry walls as may be appropriate. On corner lots, parking areas should be edged with landscape screening along both primary and secondary streets.

c. Parking lots for commercially used houses, churches, apartment buildings, bed and breakfast establishments and schools should be located in rear yards if possible. Provided:

1) Placement in a Side Yard. If placement in a side yard is required, the parking lot should not be located any closer to the front of the lot than the front wall of the principal building.

2) Screening from Public View. Commercially used parking lots should be screened from public view with hedges, shrubs, trees, ~~or~~ fences, or walls at their edges and employ appropriately planted medians and dividers within their boundaries.

3) Screening on Vacant Lots. Commercially used parking lots on vacant lots situated between buildings should align their edge landscape screening with the front facades of adjacent buildings.

4) Screening on Corner Lots. Commercially used parking lots on corner lots should have edge landscape screening on both the primary and the secondary streets.

Sidewalks and Walkways

a. Sidewalks and walkways ~~that are~~ original to a building or found elsewhere in the block in which they are situated should be preserved and repaired as needed.

b. S New sidewalks and walkways installed for a building should preferably be of smooth concrete, compatible in details, dimensions and placement with original or early sidewalks. Pea gravel secured with appropriate proprietary systems is also appropriate. Brick pavers or pavers that replicate brick may be appropriate in some instances.

c. Public sidewalks located within the Old & Historic District be brick in sand laid.

d. Existing stone edging along public sidewalks within the Old & Historic District be preserved and not removed. If no stone edging exists concrete edging may be installed flush with the brick sidewalk.

e. Sidewalks and walkways of exposed aggregate or pebble-surfaced concrete are generally not appropriate in areas subject to the public view.

f. Sidewalks and walkways of asphalt or ~~like similar~~ materials are not ~~acceptable~~ appropriate.