

BAR Review Levels

These levels of review are applicable in most cases. Please note that during the administrative review process, Staff may determine that a project must be reviewed by the Board. Contact Staff at 703.746.3833 to confirm which level of review is required for your project.

NO BAR REVIEW

Construction of fences and freestanding planter/retaining walls less than 2 feet in height

Demolition of masonry walls less than 25 square feet in area

ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF) REVIEW

Construction or modification of fences, gates, garden walls, and retaining walls

BOARD REVIEW

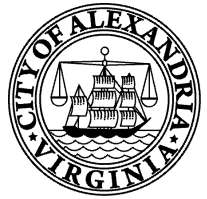
Demolition of masonry walls greater than or equal to 25 square feet in area

Introduction

Fences, gates, garden walls, and retaining walls on private property are important visual features of the historic district that provide distinctive streetscapes while also providing a sense of privacy and enclosure for property owners. Fences are often partially transparent and, in the historic district, are made of a number of materials including wood, metal, and masonry. Garden walls are constructed of masonry and provide a visual barrier. Many historic structures have fences that were added later which may, over time, have acquired independent historic significance.

Guidelines

- o Demolition of masonry walls greater than or equal to 25 square feet in area requires a BAR Permit to Demolish.
- o The design of fences, gates, garden walls, and retaining walls should be architecturally appropriate to the architectural style of the structure they surround.
- o Fences and walls should be made of wood, metal, and/or unit masonry. The Board discourages using synthetic materials such as fiberglass, poured-in-place concrete, or vinyl.
- o Wood fences should have vertical pickets.
- o Ornamental iron or metal fences are appropriate for late 19th- and early 20th-century Victorian structures.



Additional Information

- o For guidelines on planter walls, refer to chapter on planters.
- o A survey plat may be required to ensure the fence or wall is located on the subject property.
- o Fences located in front yards must be 50 percent open and cannot exceed 4 feet in height. Fences located in rear and side yards may be open or closed and cannot exceed 6 feet in height. Refer to [§ 7-202](#) of the Zoning Ordinance.
- o Fences cannot be located in a vision clearance area. Refer to [§ 7-800](#) of the Zoning Ordinance.
- o The Board may waive height, opacity, and vision clearance requirements specified in the Zoning Ordinance when the proposed fence is architecturally appropriate and consistent with the character of the district.
- o Retaining walls less than two feet in height, and fences at the height and location otherwise permitted in a front yard, may be constructed in the public right-of-way in compliance with [§ 5-2-29](#) of the City Code.



A brick and wrought iron fence at the Georgian style Christ Church.

A wrought iron fence on a Victorian style residence.

A brick and wood picket fence at the Georgian style Lloyd House.