



City of Fairfax, Virginia
10455 Armstrong Street • Fairfax, VA 22030-3630

Memorandum

DATE: July 8, 2026

TO: City of Fairfax property owners, business owners, residents, contractors, and developers

FROM: Development Review Ombudsman, City Manager's Office

SUBJECT: Notification to Industry – Major Certificate of Appropriateness Available on Permit Portal

All applications for architectural review, both minor and major certificates of appropriateness, are now applied for on the city's [Permit Portal](#). Previously, major certificates of appropriateness, those requiring a public hearing with the Board of Architectural Review (BAR), were submitted via email with a PDF application.

Minor certificates of appropriateness are required for improvements which result in only minor effects on the character of the property, such as addition or modification of doorways, ramps, walkways, shutters, porches, awnings, landscaping, skylights, antennas, satellite dishes, exterior lighting, railings, dumpster screening, mechanical equipment screening, and similar features. **Major** certificates of appropriateness are required for more significant changes that are not covered by the items listed above ([Zoning Ordinance](#) Section 110-6.5.3.). Most single-family and townhouse residential properties are exempt.

For instructions on how to apply for certificates of appropriateness and to see a process flowchart, visit our [Permit Process Guides webpage](#), under the "Architectural Review (BAR)" heading.