

Alexandria Times

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Alexandria's historic districts

Historic districts make up a key component of Alexandria's efforts at Historic Preservation. The National Register lists seven districts in Alexandria, and the city has designated two districts. Those two local historic districts are regulated by the Board of Architectural Review. Alexandria's seven National Register Historic Districts are: Fairlington, Alexandria Historic District, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Uptown/Parker-Gray, Parkfairfax, Rosemont and Town of Potomac.

The two local districts are the Old and Historic Alexandria District and the Parker Gray District. The boundaries of the local districts differ from those of the National Register Districts. Additionally, buildings designated by City Council ordinance as One Hundred-Year-Old Buildings are regulated by the Board of Architectural Review. Readers can view the historic districts as well as the 100 year-old buildings protected by the Board of Architectural Review at alexandriava.gov/preservation.

gov/preservation.

The Old and Historic District, with its protections for historic buildings, was established to control development along the George Washington Memorial Parkway as it passed through Alexandria as Washington Street. Alexandria also sought to protect the city's colonial heritage.

Since it was first designated as a Historic District in 1946, the Old and Historic District's boundaries have changed. Today, the district generally runs from the southern edge of the city from Hunting Creek north to Bashford Lane and from the Potomac River on the east to near the King Street Metro on the west. As noted above, the boundaries for the local historic district regulated by the BAR differ from those of the National Register district. The Historic Preservation Map viewer, which can be found online at the above address indicates the current boundaries for each.

The Parker-Gray District is named for the Parker Gray School which opened in 1920.

The school was named in commemoration of John Parker and Sarah Gray who had been principals of two segregated schools in Alexandria during the latter part of the 19th century, the Snowden School for Boys and the Hallowell School for Girls.

In 1984, Alexandria designated the Parker-Gray Historic District. As previously noted, the boundaries of the local Parker-Gray District regulated by the BAR differ from the Uptown/Parker-Gray National Register Historic District.

In addition to the Old and Historic Alexandria District and the Parker Gray District, the Board of Architectural Review oversees the protection of designated One Hundred Year Old Buildings located outside of the locally regulated historic district boundaries. These resources have been designated as historically or architecturally significant by the City Council and are subject to the regulations in Article 10-300 of the Zoning Ordinance. Readers can find out about the process of nominating a



PHOTO/CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

A map shows the boundaries of two locally designated historic districts.

One Hundred Year Old Building at alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/Historic-Preservation-100YOBuildg-Designation-Process.pdf.

Alexandria's ability to maintain the historic character of its buildings is a reason people choose not only to visit Alexandria, but also to live here. The designation of historic districts and the Board of Architectural Review are major contributors to maintaining that historical character.

May is National Preservation Month. To find out more about what Historic Alexandria is doing to celebrate, visit alexandriava.gov/news-oha/2023-05-01/preservation-month-in-historic-alexandria

Out of the Attic is provided by The Office of Historic Alexandria.