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# **Architectural Review Board 2025 Report to City Council**

**Architectural Review Board**

Airiel Barrientos, Chair

Katie Nguyen, Vice-Chair

Suping Li

Taylor Gould

Larry Pendleton, CPC Appointee

Greta Gustavson, Past Vice-Chair

Karen Moore Reynes

Dr. Robert Wojtowicz, Past Chair

Greg Rutledge

Approved: February 9, 2026

Department of City Planning

## Architectural Review Board 2025 Report to City Council

### Chair's Message

February 9, 2026

To the Honorable Mayor and Council  
City of Norfolk, Virginia

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Architectural Review Board (ARB), it is my pleasure to share with you a summary of the board's activities from last year.

In total, the board reviewed 94 applications for Certificates of Appropriateness, encroachments, and design review. Because of the iterative process where applicants, ARB, and staff work towards positive outcomes, the ARB was able to recommend approval for all but one application in 2025. These applications represent a range of activities in the City's historic areas, from general repair to new construction and major rehabilitation projects. We are pleased to see continued interest and support for historic preservation in Norfolk.

We are also pleased to report that the board initiated an update to the Historic District Design Guidelines in May 2025. In addition to its regular business, the ARB participated in five work sessions between May and December 2025 to review and discuss the guidelines.

We're thankful for your trust and confidence in the Architectural Review Board and the support expressed during Historic Preservation Month with the proclamation. We look forward to continuing to work together to preserve Norfolk's historic and cultural resources for all.

Sincerely,



Airiel E. Barrientos

Chair

CC: Patrick Roberts, City Manager  
Robert J. Tajan, AICP, Planning Director

## Architectural Review Board 2025 Report to City Council

# Norfolk Architectural Review Board

The Norfolk Architectural Review Board (henceforth referred to as the “ARB”) is a nine-member body, appointed by City Council, responsible for final decisions on projects requiring Certificates of Appropriateness and makes recommendations to the City Planning Commission for projects requiring design review or a Development Certificate. The ARB also provides comments on pending nominations to the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places.

ARB members in 2025 were: Airiel Barrientos, Chair; Katie Nguyen, Vice-Chair; Taylor Gould; Greta Gustavson; Suping Li; Larry Pendleton; Greg Rutledge; and Dr. Robert Wojtowicz. Elizabeth Nowak, Historic Preservation Officer, served as the Executive Secretary for the ARB.

The ARB met on 21 separate occasions in 2025, convening the second and fourth Monday of each month except November and December, where only one meeting was held each month due to the holidays. All but one of the scheduled meetings in the past year were held; the single meeting that was cancelled was due to having no applications. The board had a quorum for every scheduled meeting. The table below illustrates each member’s attendance for the year.

Member	Meetings Attended	Meetings Absent
Airiel Barrientos, Chair	19	2
Katie Nguyen, Vice Chair	17	4
Taylor Gould	16	5
Greta Gustavson	20	1
Suping Li	17	4
Larry Pendleton	18	3
Karen Moore Reynes**	17	1
Greg Rutledge	19	2
Dr. Robert Wojtowicz	19	2

\*Left the board during the 2025 calendar year

\*\*Joined the board during the 2025 calendar year

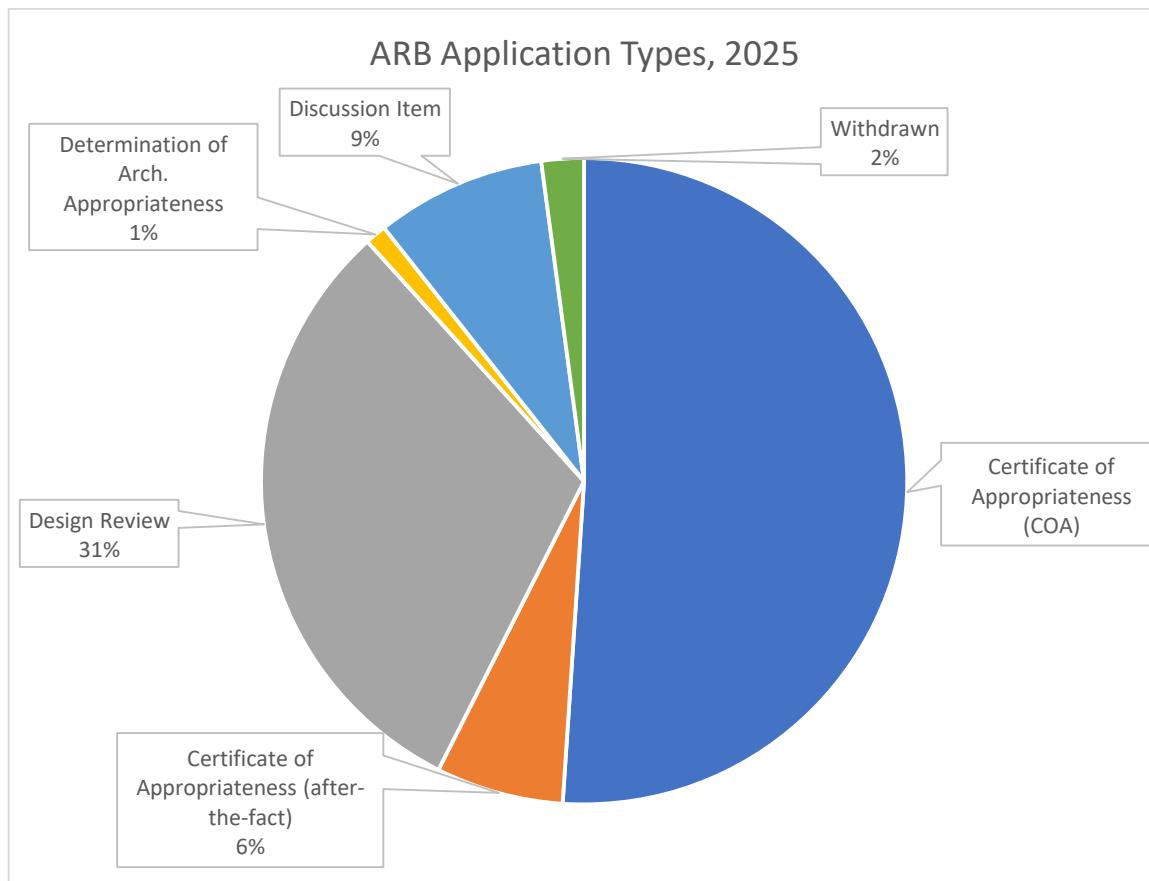
In 2025, the ARB processed 94 Certificate of Appropriateness, Design Review, Development Certificate, and Discussion applications. The ARB considered presentations on other topics throughout the year, including the various National Register nomination initiatives, Norfolk’s casino project, and the Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRM) Project. Additionally, the ARB initiated an update to the Historic District Design Guidelines, which had last been updated in 2012. The update is expected to be completed in the first quarter of calendar year 2026.

## Applications Reviewed

Of the 94 Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), Design Review (DR), and Development Certificate (DC) applications reviewed by the ARB in 2025, the majority were COAs. The ARB approved all COAs but one and recommended approval for all DR and DC applications to City Planning Commission (CPC).

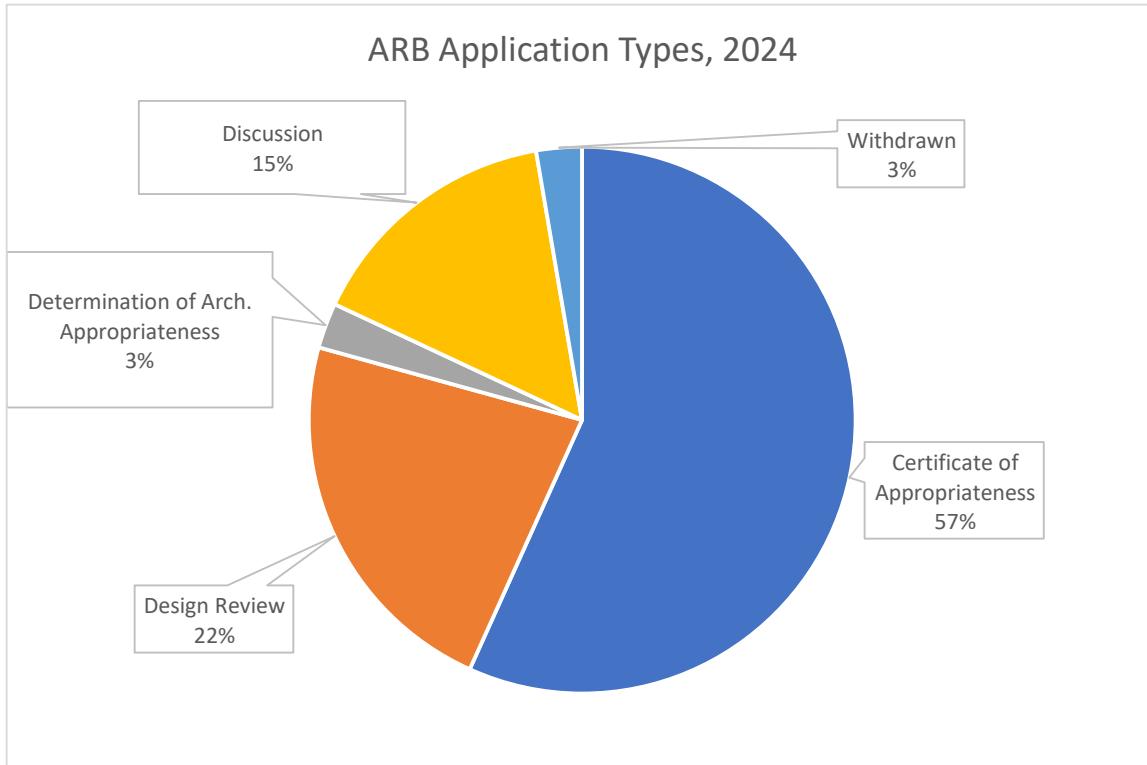
The single COA denial was of a request for after-the-fact approval to replace historic windows with new, non-matching windows. This denial was upheld by City Council on appeal by the applicant. The property owner has been working with City Staff and a window company to resolve the violation. He presented an update to the ARB at its December 15, 2025 meeting.

Additionally, the ARB reviewed one zoning text amendment for the West Freemason Historic and Cultural Conservation District (HC-WF) proposing to prohibit short term rentals in the district. ARB recommended denial to CPC; the amendment was recommended for approval by CPC and approved by City Council.



## Architectural Review Board 2025 Report to City Council

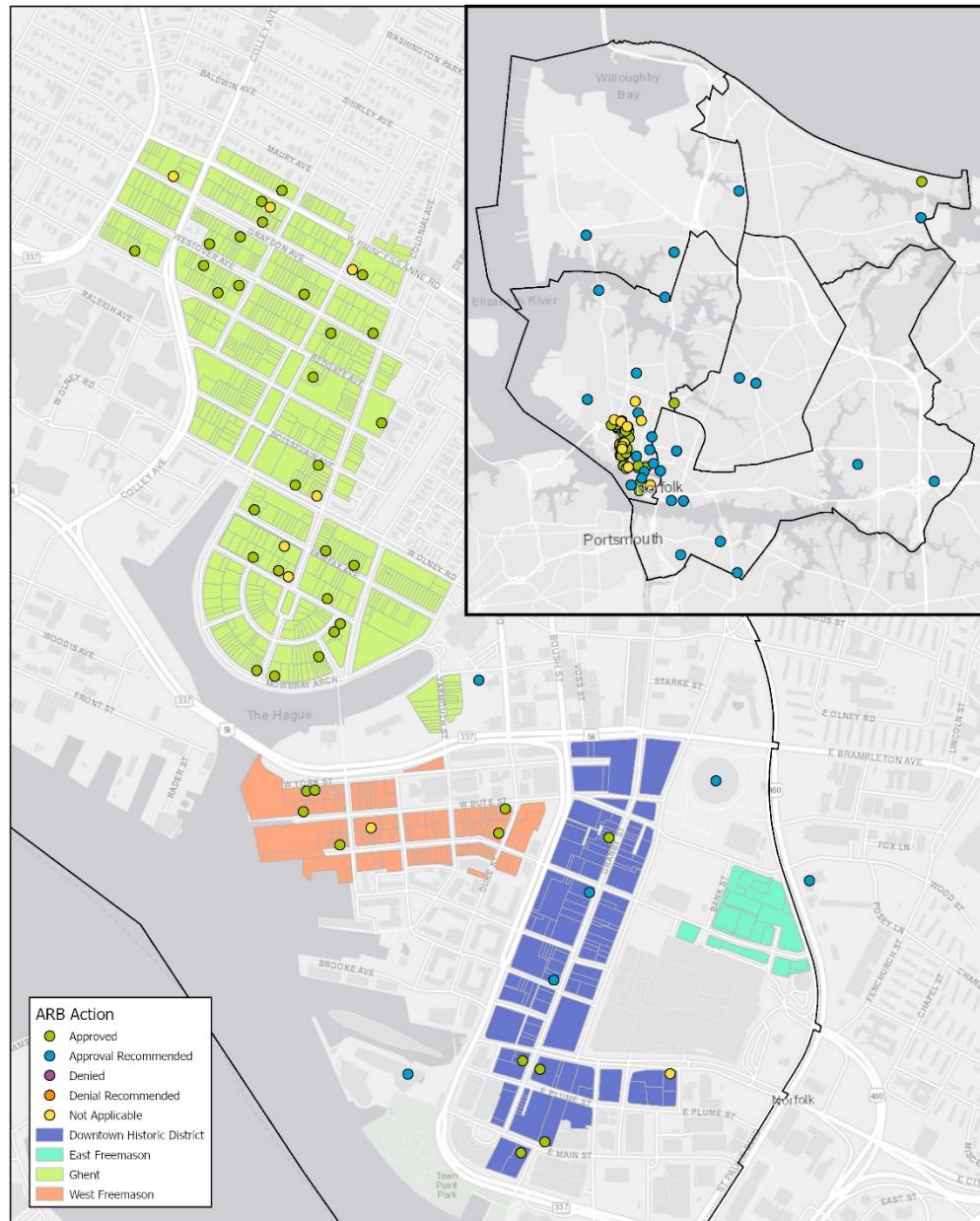
ARB Application Type, 2025	Count	%
<b>Certificate of Appropriateness</b>	48	51%
<b>Certificate of Appropriateness (After-the-Fact)</b>	6	6%
<b>Design Review</b>	29	31%
<b>Determination of Architectural Appropriateness</b>	1	1%
<b>Discussion</b>	8	9%
<b>Withdrawn</b>	2	2%



ARB Application Type, 2024	Count	%
<b>Certificate of Appropriateness</b>	63	57%
<b>Design Review</b>	25	23%
<b>Determination of Architectural Appropriateness</b>	3	3%
<b>Discussion</b>	17	15%
<b>Withdrawn</b>	3	3%

## Distribution of Reviewed Applications

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of the types of applications reviewed by the ARB in 2025. Each dot on the map represents one item or application reviewed by the ARB in the year 2025.



Source: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

## Architectural Review Board 2025 Report to City Council

## Certified Local Government

### Training Requirements

As a Certified Local Government, ARB members are required to complete a minimum of one training during the federal fiscal year (Oct. 1 to Sept. 30). We are pleased to report that the ARB far exceeded this minimum requirement for the most recent reporting period and completed a total of 72 hours of training. A majority of board members completed at least three trainings.

Commissioner/Staff Name	Training Title	Duration (hours)	Date
Ariel Barrientos	CLG Training in Williamsburg	8	<b>11/15/2024</b>
	The Evolution & Legacy of Roadside Architecture and Neon Signage	1.5	<b>2/20/2025</b>
	Deconstruction vs. Demolition-Protecting Heritage and the Environment	1.5	<b>3/27/2025</b>
	Through the Pane	1.5	<b>5/28/2025</b>
Taylor Gould	CLG Training in Williamsburg	8	<b>11/15/2024</b>
	Navigating ADU Development in Historic Districts	1.5	<b>12/12/2024</b>
	NAPC Virtual Summer Short Course	9	<b>8/20/2025-8/21/2025</b>
Greta Gustavson	Practical Solutions to Legal Issues for Commissions	1.5	<b>11/13/2024</b>
	Historic Survey	1.5	<b>1/30/2025</b>
	The Evolution & Legacy of Roadside Architecture and Neon Signage	1.5	<b>2/20/2025</b>
	Deconstruction vs. Demolition-Protecting Heritage and the Environment	1.5	<b>3/27/2025</b>
Suping Li	CLG Training in Williamsburg	8	<b>11/15/2024</b>
	Deconstruction vs. Demolition-Protecting Heritage and the Environment	1.5	<b>3/27/2025</b>

## Architectural Review Board 2025 Report to City Council

Commissioner/Staff Name	Training Title	Duration (hours)	Date
Katie Nguyen	CLG Training in Williamsburg	8	<b>11/15/2024</b>
Larry Pendleton	CLG Training in Williamsburg	8	<b>11/15/2024</b>
Greg Rutledge	Foundation Repair of San Francisco's Millennium Tower	1	<b>10/25/2024</b>
	Historic Survey	1.5	<b>1/30/2025</b>
	Deconstruction vs. Demolition- Protecting Heritage and the Environment	1.5	<b>3/27/2025</b>
	Engaging Local Decision Makers to Support Historic Preservation	1.5	<b>5/29/2025</b>
	Ask Me Anything About Terrazzo	1	<b>9/9/2025</b>
Robert Wojtowicz	CLG Training in Williamsburg	8	<b>11/15/2024</b>
Karen Reynes	Deconstruction vs. Demolition- Protecting Heritage and the Environment	1.5	<b>3/27/2025</b>
	Through the Pane Pt. 1- Understanding Historic Windows: Evolution, Assessment & Repair	1.5	<b>4/17/2025</b>

### National Register of Historic Places

As part of its powers and duties, the Architectural Review Board reviews draft nominations for resources in Norfolk that are being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The board is invited to provide comments on such nominations to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. In 2025, the ARB was pleased to support the nominations of the Talbot Park Apartments, which accompanied a multiple-property documentation form for Garden Apartment Complexes of Norfolk, and the Norfolk Cultural and Convention Center.

The ARB's City Staff continue to support historic survey and nomination efforts, which the ARB hopes will lead to additional nominations to the National Register. A Local Government Grant secured and managed by the City Planning Department with matching City funds supported completion of the architectural survey of Lindenwood and preparation of a Preliminary Information Form for the neighborhood in 2025. This project added 197 properties to Norfolk's historic properties survey. The PIF for Lindenwood was recommended eligible by the State Review Board at its December 2025 meeting.

## Historic District Design Guidelines

The ARB and its staff initiated an update to the 2012 Historic District Design Guidelines in spring 2025. The update addresses outdated references (like those referring to the pre-2018 zoning ordinance), clarifies existing language, provides additional education about historic preservation, and adds guidelines for project types that are missing. The ARB had five work sessions in 2025 to discuss the guidelines. Additionally, City Staff hosted two public meetings in June 2025 and attended multiple civic league or civic association meetings in Downtown, Ghent, and West Freemason. City Staff also ran a survey to gather feedback and opinions on the existing guidelines during June 2025.