

**ISSUE:** Complete Demolition of Four Buildings

**APPLICANT:** Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority

**LOCATION:** 699 North Patrick Street

**ZONE:** RB / Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall provide a written history of the Ramsey Homes project, which at a minimum contains information of the date of construction, any major alterations, information about persons or events associated with Ramsey Homes, general architectural characteristics, background on the architect and contextual history on early public housing in Alexandria. The history should be prepared by an historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior's qualifications and approved by Historic Preservation Staff.
2. The applicant shall provide archival quality photographic documentation to HABS/HAER Standards (Historic American Building Survey and Historic American Engineering Record), consisting of large scale prints and digital files.
3. The applicant shall provide to the City measured drawings of the two building types in the Ramsey Homes development to HABS/HAER Standards (Historic American Building Survey and Historic American Engineering Record). The drawings should include floor plans and elevations at a minimum scale of  $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ . Drawings may be in pencil or ink on vellum or mylar on sheets with maximum dimensions of 30" x 42". The applicant shall also submit digital files.
4. Prior to the issuance of the Demolition Permit, the two sets of the photographs together with digital copies and the measured drawings shall be completed, approved by Historic Preservation Staff and deposited at the Alexandria Black History Museum and the Special Collections of the Barrett Library.
5. Hire an archaeological consultant to complete a Documentary Study and an Archaeological Evaluation. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant shall complete a Resource Management Plan, as outlined in the City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards. Preservation measures presented in the Resource Management Plan, as approved by the City Archaeologist, will be implemented.

**NOTES TO THE APPLICANT**

1. **ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS AND PERMITS TO DEMOLISH:** Applicants must obtain a stamped copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness or Permit to Demolish PRIOR to applying for a building permit. Contact BAR Staff, Room 2100, City Hall, 703-746-3833, or [preservation@alexandriava.gov](mailto:preservation@alexandriava.gov) for further information.
2. **APPEAL OF DECISION:** In accordance with the Zoning Ordinance, if the Board of Architectural Review denies or approves an application in whole or in part, the applicant or opponent may appeal the Board's decision to City Council on or before 14 days after the decision of the Board.
3. **COMPLIANCE WITH BAR POLICIES:** All materials must comply with the BAR's adopted policies unless otherwise specifically approved.
4. **BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.
5. **EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.
6. **HISTORIC PROPERTY TAX CREDITS:** Applicants performing extensive, certified rehabilitations of historic properties may separately be eligible for state and/or federal tax credits. Consult with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) prior to initiating any work to determine whether the proposed project may qualify for such credits.



**BAR2015-00088**



## I. ISSUE

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish to demolish the four two-story buildings that collectively comprise the Ramsey Homes site. The applicant intends to demolish the buildings to construct two larger buildings that the BAR is currently reviewing in concept (BAR #2015-0029).

## II. HISTORY

The Ramsey Homes project began construction in November **1941** as part of the wartime housing effort.<sup>1</sup> Today the site is comprised of four buildings—three quadruplexes and one triplex—two-stories in height with a low hipped roof. The buildings are stucco with one-story covered front porches. The project architect was the local firm of Smith, Werner and Billings, who had offices located at 220 King Street. The three architects—Delos H. Smith, Sheldon Werner and J. M. Billings—were selected to work for the housing authority to create plans for hundreds of wartime housing units. Smith had formerly worked for the United States Housing Authority before being selected as the local architect, working for Executive Director of the Alexandria Housing Board, R. S. Marshall, Jr. Smith was one of the inaugural members of the Alexandria Board of Architectural Review, appointed in November of 1946, as well as a charter member of the Historic Alexandria Foundation.<sup>2</sup> Smith was a noted ecclesiastical architect and his local work included two annex buildings at St. Paul’s Church as well as the Capitol Building Prayer Room.<sup>3</sup>

ARHA located an early set of blueprints that indicate the project was constructed differently than it was originally designed. The blueprints described the project as an “Experimental Housing Project for Alexandria, Virginia.” The original blueprints showed two quadruplexes, each flanking a large rectangular footprint barracks-style center building. The buildings had a decidedly modern architectural character and horizontal emphasis with a flat roof with central monitor. The blueprints included a few study variations with different window arrangements and materials, within the same standard block form. Historic aerials indicate that the buildings have had a hipped roof since at least 1962.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949 National Register Nomination; A Historic Context, Vol. I, Appendix IV – Federal Public Housing Projects 1933-1949.

<sup>2</sup> “Architect Delos Smith,” *Alexandria Gazette*, Nov. 9, 1946: p. 9. and “Historic Alexandria Foundation” files at Alexandria Library Special Collections.

<sup>3</sup> St. Paul’s Church to Break Ground for New Buildings,” *Alexandria Gazette*, October 27, 1955: p. 1. and <http://research.history.org/library/materials/manuscripts/view/index.cfm?id=SmithDelos>



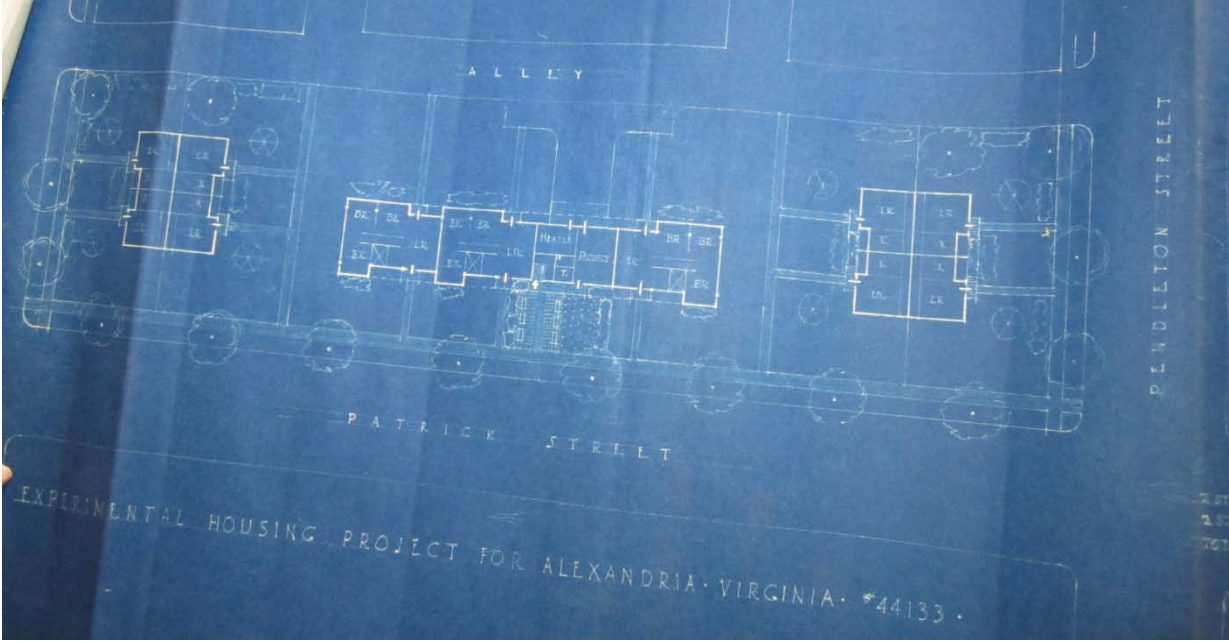


Figure 1. Original plan for Ramsey Homes site showing larger central building and end quadruplexes. Source: ARHA Archives.

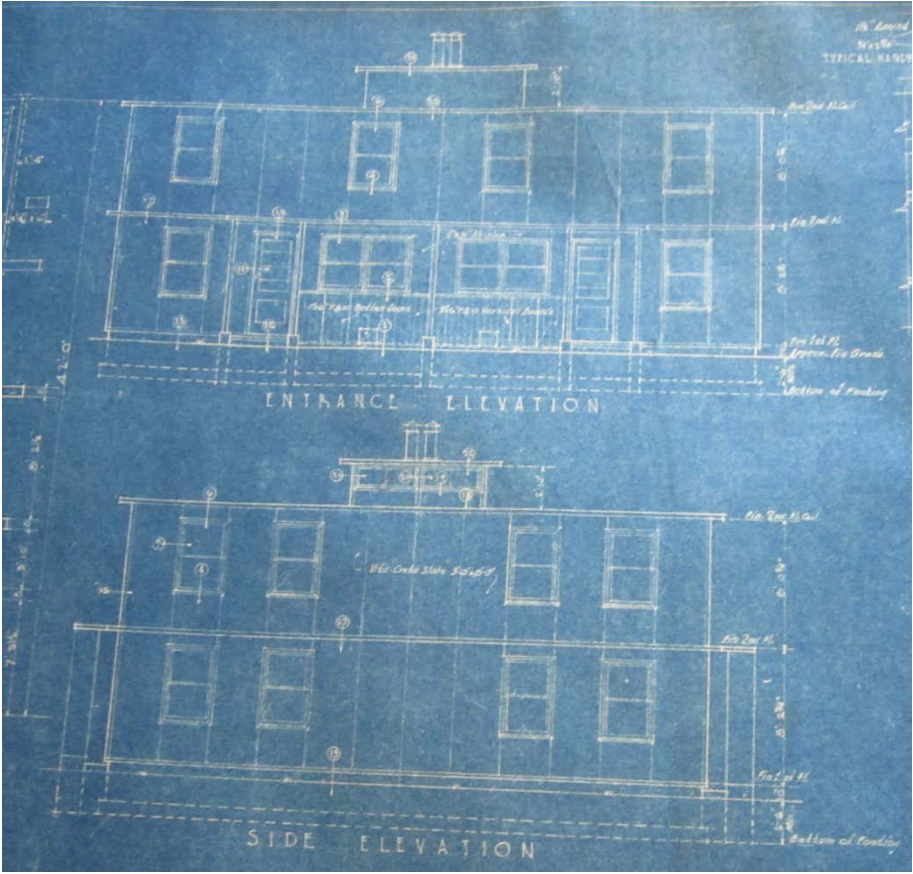
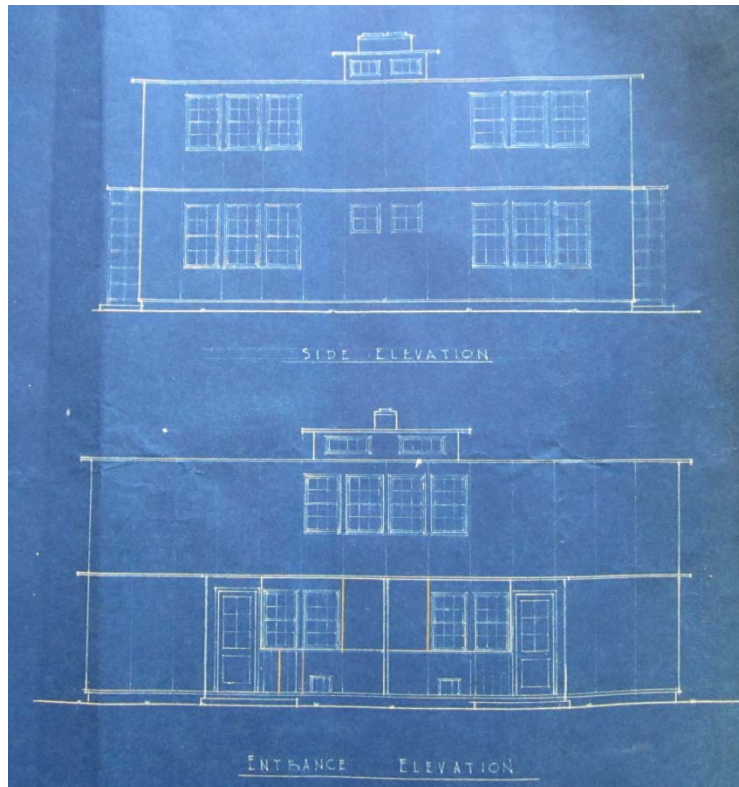


Figure 2. Original design that was constructed, 1941. Source: ARHA Archives.



**Figure 3. Alternate scheme featuring triple multi-pane windows. Source: ARHA Archives.**

The land was acquired in 1941 by the United States government for defense housing. The 1958 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map describes the site as a United States Housing Authority project constructed specifically for African Americans. The Sanborn map describes the building construction as pre-cast concrete slabs and walls. After World War II, the Federal Public Housing Authority divested itself of several defense housing projects. It was at that time, in 1953, that the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority acquired the property. At the time of construction, the Ramsey Homes were located across the street from the first Parker-Gray School (after 1950 it became the Charles Houston Elementary School which later burned and is now the new Charles Houston Recreation Center, Figure 4) and on the same block as the Robert Robinson Library (now the Alexandria Black History Museum). Figure 5 shows the condition and design of nearby existing housing around the time of construction. It appears that the roof form was changed circa 1960 and staff believes there are two explanations for the change. First, flat roofs notoriously presented ongoing maintenance issues and in the interest of cost savings for maintenance, converting from a flat to a gable roof was a logical solution. Additionally, being a more modern design at the time of construction, it is quite possible that the addition of multi-paned windows and a more traditional roof form enabled the project to better fit in to Old Town, particularly once under the City's control. ARHA altered other projects as well, such as the addition of door surrounds at the former James Bland Homes, to make them more Colonial Revival and compatible with nearby buildings.





**Figure 4. Directly north of Ramsey Homes site on Wythe Street was the Parker-Gray School (1920-1950) which later became the Charles Houston Elementary School until desegregation. It is the current site of the Charles Houston Recreation Center. Source: Alexandria Library Special Collections.**



**Figure 5. North side of 800 block of Wythe Street, adjacent to Ramsey Homes, circa 1950. Source: Alexandria Library Special Collections.**

The Ramsey Homes, as well as several other housing sites in the City, including the demolished Chinquapin Village, the demolished John Roberts Homes, the mostly demolished Cameron Valley project, and the partially extant George W. Parker Homes, were constructed under the Lanham Act in the early 1940s. The Lanham Act was broad and encompassing legislation that provided for the construction of various types of housing that included: low-rent or slum clearance housing, temporary war housing and permanent war housing that would be converted after the war emergency ended. It was intended that temporary housing constructed under the Lanham Act would be removed and dismantled within two years of the end of the emergency. The Lanham Act also funded the construction and operation of wartime nursery schools, including the Carver Nursery to provide subsidized childcare for African American children whose parents worked for the defense effort. The Ramsey Homes project was constructed initially as permanent family housing.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, it would appear that the Ramsey Homes may have been one of the better quality family dwelling unit options as they had the second highest rent of all ARHA properties with only Chinquapin Village having higher rents by the mid 1950s when ARHA operated the properties.<sup>5</sup>

The property has only been reviewed by the Board of Architectural Review since 1984 when the Parker-Gray District was established. In 1995, the BAR approved replacement metal fencing, replacement stucco, replacement of coping on the porches, addition of canopies over the front doors, replacement windows and doors, and new shutters (BAR 95-35PG, 12/13/1995). In 2008, a National Register nomination was prepared for the Uptown/Parker-Gray National Register District and identified these buildings as contributing resources, noting their unique “Prairie” style architecture. The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2010.

At a BAR concept review work session on February 25, 2015, the BAR discussed the possible demolition of these buildings as well as reviewed a concept proposal for new construction. The majority of the BAR members noted that the existing buildings had some significance and did not support complete demolition. They requested more information on the existing buildings and advised looking into retaining and rehabilitating at least some, if not all, of the existing project.

### **III. ANALYSIS**

As the BAR is well aware, the applicant is requesting demolition in order to construct two new buildings that the BAR is separately reviewing through the BAR concept review process. As a reminder, the BAR should not consider what might replace an existing building when evaluating the criteria for a Permit to Demolish. Staff also reminds the BAR that they cannot consider financial matters, master plan requirements, parking issues or the like as they are beyond the BAR’s purview. The condition of a building does not justify demolition.

For background, ARHA has initiated a process to redevelop several housing sites that they manage throughout the City. ARHA intends to jointly redevelop the sites with a private developer. While four of the five sites proposed for redevelopment are located within Old Town, only one site is located in a local historic district. That site is Samuel Madden and is comprised

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<sup>4</sup> “Scheme of NHA Involves 26,206 Units in 6 Groups in Metropolitan Area,” *The Washington Post*: Sep 12, 1943: R4.

<sup>5</sup> “Alexandria Facing Some Rent Boosts,” *The Washington Post*: Nov. 29, 1957: D4.



of two blocks of Colonial Revival garden apartments located between North Henry and North Patrick streets. The project before the BAR at this time is not part of this larger public-private redevelopment effort. More information can be found here:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/planning/info/default.aspx?id=83919>

Additionally, it is important to understand the larger context of these particular buildings in both the Parker-Gray neighborhood and the City as a whole. Many of the wartime housing projects that were later acquired by ARHA and the City in the past have been demolished or are proposed for demolition in the near future. While beyond the scope of the BAR's purview, staff provides this background information to the BAR on housing in the City to understand how this particular project fits in. City Council approved a Housing Master Plan in late 2013 that had a number of goals, including the replacement of redeveloped public housing units on a one-for-one basis as well as to increase the amount of safe and affordable housing for all income levels. Additionally, many initiatives have sought to create mixed-income communities. The approved Housing Master Plan can be found here:

<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/housing/info/Housing%20Master%20Plan%20Final.pdf>

Whenever an applicant proposes complete demolition of a building that is historic or potentially historic, staff requires that a comprehensive history report be prepared as part of the submission requirements. The applicant submitted a brief historical overview but has since located early blueprints. Staff has also done some preliminary research, including research at City Archives, Special Collections, and the Alexandria Black History Museum in order to better inform our understanding of this site. There could likely be additional research done to present a more comprehensive understanding of the significance, or lack thereof, of this property as well as its broader context.

In considering a Permit to Demolish, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-205(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its removal would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into an historic shrine?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture, and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists, and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage and making the city a more attractive and desirable place to live?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure help maintain the scale and character of the neighborhood?

These six criteria to consider when evaluating a Permit to Demolish are not strict requirements but rather they are *considerations* that involve a certain degree of subjectivity on the part of the BAR and staff. While a building may “meet” one or more criteria, that alone does not preclude the BAR’s ability to approve demolition however it might inform conditions of approval or foster dialogue about what the BAR and the community value. For example, if the BAR found that a building proposed for demolition were able to provide insights into the study and interest in American history and culture, an expanded historical study may be required to place the project within a broader context.

Based on comments made at the February 22, 2015 meeting by the BAR and the community, as well as from additional research and information, Staff finds that at least three of the criteria should be considered. Specifically, staff thinks that Criteria 4, 5 and 6 should be considered and will review each criterion individually.

**(1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its removal would be to the detriment of the public interest?**

There are very few buildings whose removal would be to the detriment of the public interest. Ramsey Homes is not one of these buildings whose demolition would be a significant detriment to the public interest.

**(2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into an historic shrine?**

Very few buildings can be made into historic shrines. Iconic buildings such as the George Washington Masonic Memorial and Gadsby’s Tavern are typically associated with historic shrines, museums and visitor destinations. Ramsey Homes would be an unlikely candidate as a historic shrine.

**(3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture, and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?**

Ramsey Homes features mass-produced materials and modern building technology, typical of a mid-twentieth-century building.

**(4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?**

While these four buildings are by no means architectural masterpieces that warrant a meticulous restoration of form, craftsmanship and material, and were clearly modified over the years, they do play a role in our understanding of the Parker-Gray neighborhood and Alexandria’s involvement with the war effort. While staff does not find that the buildings could be made into an historic shrine nor that the buildings have an unusual and irreproducible design, these buildings, constructed specifically for African Americans as part of a nationwide defense housing campaign. The project was located in an institutional center for African Americans across from the Parker-Gray School (later Charles Houston Elementary School), on the same block as the Robert Robinson Library

and near several African American churches (Figure 6). This African American center of life reflects segregation patterns in Alexandria in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

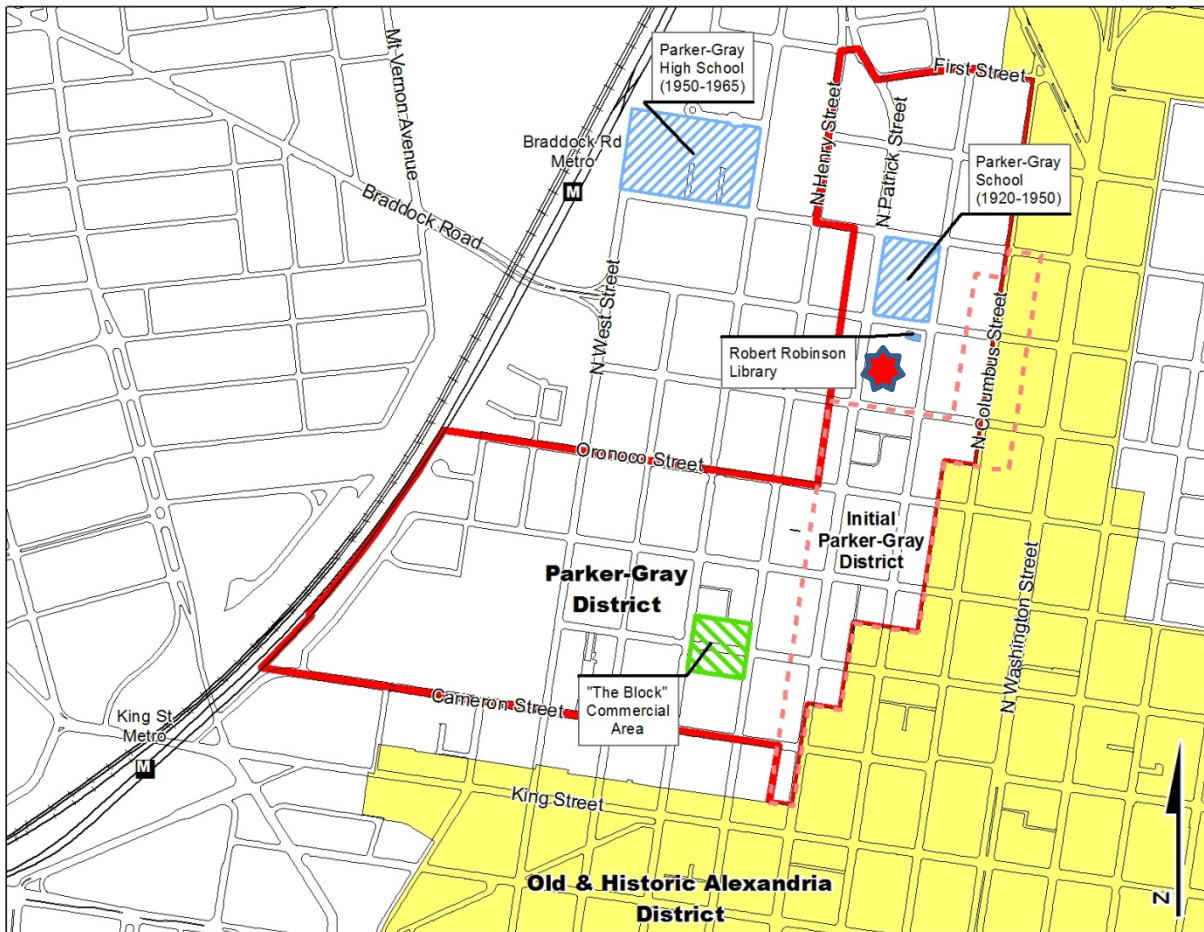


Figure 6. Map showing significant African American sites in Parker-Gray with RED STAR indicating Ramsey Homes site.

- (5) **Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists, and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage and making the city a more attractive and desirable place to live?**

This small housing project has a distinctly different architectural character and orientation than similar housing projects in the Washington, D.C., area which generally employed a minimalist Colonial Revival style and featured concrete construction clad in red brick with gabled roofs. The context photograph in Figure 4 shows what would have been a typical frame construction dwelling in Parker-Gray in the 1940s. These buildings represented distinctly modern, new housing for African Americans within an established neighborhood. The original blueprints—which were never fully constructed as drawn—represent a significant departure in architectural style and form from the existing



neighborhood as well as reflect the predominant wartime and post-war architectural trends in Alexandria, reflective of the “Experimental” nature of this project.

While the original design has been altered over the years, the site is physical evidence of a strong cultural and social history, not unlike the former Carver Nursery School at 224 North Fayette Street. Staff and the BAR had initially supported demolition of the Carver Nursery School finding that it was not architecturally significant. However, some members of the community responded that the building did possess cultural significance and therefore should be saved. Additional research and understanding of the context was necessary to determine the significance of that particular building which was architecturally undistinguished. Similarly, the current condition of these buildings is not architecturally unique or significant but the buildings could possess cultural and social significance that promote the history of Parker-Gray, particularly as the cultural history of Parker-Gray has become less visibly apparent. Staff does find that the original design which featured quadruplexes in the International Style to be interesting and unique, particularly coming from a local architect who specialized in the Colonial Revival and Federal Revival styles. Additionally, while these may be considered “average” buildings to the common eye, they are some of the remaining early public housing buildings constructed in the City. Heritage tourism continues to grow in Alexandria and, if retained, these buildings could be incorporated into understanding 20<sup>th</sup>-century African American history as part of a larger initiative by ACVA to promote African American heritage tourism.

**(6) Would retention of the building or structure help maintain the scale and character of the neighborhood?**

The buildings maintain the scale and character of this area of the district which is comprised of predominantly two-story buildings with a fewer number of one-story and three-story buildings as well. There are buildings of larger scale in the Braddock neighborhood, but not within the blocks immediately adjacent to this property. The existing buildings maintain a significant amount of open space and open setting that has come to characterize many of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century residential buildings in this area of the district. However, when City Council adopted the Braddock East Master Plan in 2008, the plan envisioned an appropriate height of 30 to 40 feet with a maximum of 45 feet for roofline variation; a master plan is an indication of the community’s understanding of the scale and character of that community.

Summary

Although the existing Ramsey Homes buildings may meet some of the criteria that the BAR must consider when evaluating a Permit to Demolish, staff supports the demolition request with the conditions noted above, noting that the current condition of the buildings is compromised and there is not enough information presently available to determine such cultural or social significance that would warrant preservation of these buildings.

**STAFF**

Catherine K. Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

#### IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C- code requirement R- recommendation S- suggestion F- finding

##### Planning & Zoning Development Division Comments

No comments on Permit to Demolish application.

##### Code Administration

No comments received.

##### Transportation and Environmental Services

1. Comply with all requirements of DSP2014-00035 (TES)
2. The Final Site Plan must be approved and released and a copy of that plan must be attached to the demolition permit application. No demolition permit will be issued in advance of the building permit unless the Final Site Plan includes a demolition plan which clearly represents the demolished condition. (T&ES)

##### Alexandria Archaeology

Open Space and Landscaping

1. Hire a professional consultant to work with staff and the landscape designers to incorporate and interpret elements of the historical character and archaeological findings into the design of the open space and to prepare interpretive elements, which shall be erected as part of the development project. The site plan shall indicate themes and locations of interpretive elements. Prior to release of the final site plan, the consultant shall provide text and graphics for the signage subject to approval by the Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology and the Directors of P&Z and/or RP&CA.\* (Arch)(P&Z)(RP&CA)

Archaeology Comments

2. Hire an archaeological consultant to complete a Documentary Study and an Archaeological Evaluation. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant shall complete a Resource Management Plan, as outlined in the City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards. Preservation measures presented in the Resource Management Plan, as approved by the City Archaeologist, will be implemented. (Archaeology)
3. The Final Site Plan, Grading Plan, or any other permits involving ground disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance) shall not be released until the City archaeologist confirms that all archaeological field work has been completed or that an approved Resource Management Plan is in place to recover significant resources in concert with construction activities. \* (Archaeology)

4. Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-746-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds. The language noted above shall be included on all final site plan sheets involving any ground disturbing activities. (Archaeology)
5. The applicant shall not allow any metal detection and/or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology. Failure to comply shall result in project delays. The language noted above shall be included on all final site plan sheets involving any ground disturbing activities. (Archaeology)
6. Certificates of Occupancy shall not be issued for this property until interpretive elements have been constructed, interpretive markers have been erected, and the final archaeological report has been received and approved by the City Archaeologist.\*\*\* (Archaeology)

#### **V. ATTACHMENTS**

*1 – Draft Minutes from February 25, 2015*

*2 – Supplemental Materials*

*3 – Application for BAR #2015-0088: 699 North Patrick Street (Ramsey Homes)*



**ATTACHMENT 1**

**DRAFT BAR MINUTES: February 25, 2015**

**The Board held an informal BAR Concept Review work session with public testimony to discuss the redevelopment of 699 North Patrick St (Ramsey Homes).**

**SPEAKERS**

Duncan Blair, attorney for ARHA, the applicant, introduced the project and the process for public outreach and review, as well as the limitations of this project.

Roy Priest, CEO of ARHA, provided background on the existing Ramsey Homes site (acquired by the City in 1956) and also explained how this site fit within ARHA's redevelopment portfolio. Mr. Priest also noted that the economics did not allow for upgrading the existing buildings.

Smita Anand, KTGy, project architect, gave an overview of the design of the project and explained how they addressed concerns about height, scale and mass.

Gail Rothrock, 209 Duke Street, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, noted that the existing buildings were a contributing resource to the National Register district. She spoke in opposition to the proposed demolition and believed that four of the six criteria related to a Permit to Demolish were met. She recommended renovation and an addition. She also inquired whether a Section 106 review would be required.

Glen Roe, 920 Pendleton Street, spoke in opposition, finding that the proposal was in contrast to the BAR's adopted policies and that the project would diminish the character of the historic district.

Leslie Zupan, president of the West Old Town Civic Association, expressed concern regarding the proposed height, scale and mass of the project, as well as the canyonization of the Route 1 corridor.

Matt Shuba, 515 North Patrick Street, agreed with the previous speakers and noted that the project should consider the scale of the surrounding buildings.

Susan Nelson, 624 North Patrick Street, spoke in support of the project and revitalization.

Mykhalyo Panarin, 909 Pendleton Street, spoke in opposition, finding it inconsistent with the related master plans and noting the significant impact on immediately adjacent properties.

Katie Springer, 600 North Alfred Street, spoke in opposition, expressing concern about the demolition and also the height, scale and mass.

Gabriel Behr, 622 North Patrick Street, expressed concerns and recommended a lower height and preservation of the green open space.

Ninette Sadusky, 910 Pendleton Street, spoke in opposition to the project and recommended retaining and rehabilitating the existing Ramsey Homes, not demolition.

Mark Mueller, 414 South Royal Street, spoke in opposition of the project finding high-density was not appropriate in this historic neighborhood.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Chairman Duffy noted that the applicant was very early in the process and noted that the consideration of the demolition, the context of the project and the general architectural character were very important to consider at this time.

Mr. Moffatt stated that he supported revitalization in the neighborhood but preferred the rehabilitation of the existing buildings as the approach. He found that some of the criteria for a Permit to Demolish were met, including Numbers 1, 4, 5 and 6. He recommended rehabilitating the existing buildings and the consideration of additions instead. He also asked whether a Section 106 process would be required. The applicant responded that they would look into that but did not think it was necessary. He also noted that when an applicant proposes a compromise solution or design, that it should be closer to the target rather than something so extreme. He opposed the height, scale mass and canyonization of Route 1. He noted that this site was in the heart of Parker-Gray.

Mr. Slowik agreed with Mr. Moffatt's comments about demolition and meeting the criteria for a Permit to Demolish. He wanted to hear more about rehabilitation as an alternative. He noted that the James Bland redevelopment site was a different context and could be a larger scale. He stated that a different design was necessary here because this site is closer to historic buildings with a smaller scale. He thought the height and scale were wholly inappropriate and that it was too early to discuss architectural character.

Ms. Irwin agreed that the applicant should first look at what can be done with the existing buildings. She also was concerned about the loss of green space. She noted that the number of units and project viability was not a BAR issue. She said that the applicant needed to provide an analysis of the rhythm of the adjacent buildings. She also thought it was too tall and premature to talk about style but believed the architecture should be of its time and not historic mimicry. She advised the applicant to look at the amount of open space and the importance of free play, and also noted that the BAR encouraged new and untried approaches.

Ms. del Ninno stated that the existing buildings did not have much glamour to them but she understood that they had significance. She recommended studying the retention of at least some of the existing buildings. She found the project too massive. She advised the architect to look at Parker-Gray architecture to understand the characteristics of this area, noting that the buildings historically were simple, featured porches and did not have large mansard roofs.

Mr. Conkey noted that he usually supported additional density but this time agreed with the comments already made by his fellow BAR members. He stated that he would likely support demolition if there were a good enough reason. He noted that the proposed buildings were really big. He differentiated this proposal from the James Bland project, which he supported, by

explaining that it became its own context due to the scale of the project. He noted that this project was within a block with historic buildings and that even the Charles Houston Recreation Center was not this big. He found the mass and scale to be too big. He noted that the architectural character was fighting itself. He thought the townhouses and mansard roofs were too big. He opposed a condo building that tried to look like townhouses, stating a strong preference for an honest architectural expression. He stated that if demolition were appropriate, that a larger building should be at the proper scale and rhythm.

Mr. Owens appreciated the early involvement by the applicant and the comments from the neighbors. He stated that the existing buildings were unique and that maybe at least one could be preserved. He hoped for a satisfying resolution for everyone. He said that the project was not at a point where there could be a meaningful architectural discussion. He thought the project was too big with respect to height, scale and mass. He was disappointed that one third of the site was dedicated to parking. He suggested looking at below-grade parking and retaining more open space. He noted this was a start but there was more to do.

Chairman Duffy thanked the applicant for coming to the BAR early in the process. He stated that it was rare that the entire BAR would be of a similar mind but that the comments indicated the project was very far from the target. He noted that this site was in the heart of Parker-Gray. He said that lots of citizen engagement would be necessary. He advised restudying the height, scale, and mass. He noted that economics were important but beyond the BAR's purview. He recommended bringing more details about the overall context for future work sessions. He recommended that the applicant work with BAR staff to find an appropriate architectural vocabulary. He noted that this block was unique in Parker-Gray with the amount of open space. He advocated for more open space. He concluded by noting that the BAR members were all of a similar mindset on this case and that they looked forward to working on this project.



### **Description of the Reasons for Demolition**

The existing structures were built in 1942 as temporary war housing. Significant modifications have been made to the structures since the initial construction, including pitched roofs with shingles.

The Board of Commissioners of the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA) has determined as part of the 2012-2022 Strategic Plan that the property should be redeveloped under Housing Goal 2: "Replace ARHA housing where it is no longer viable or where conversion or redevelopment provides a substantial advantage to ARHA and its residents."

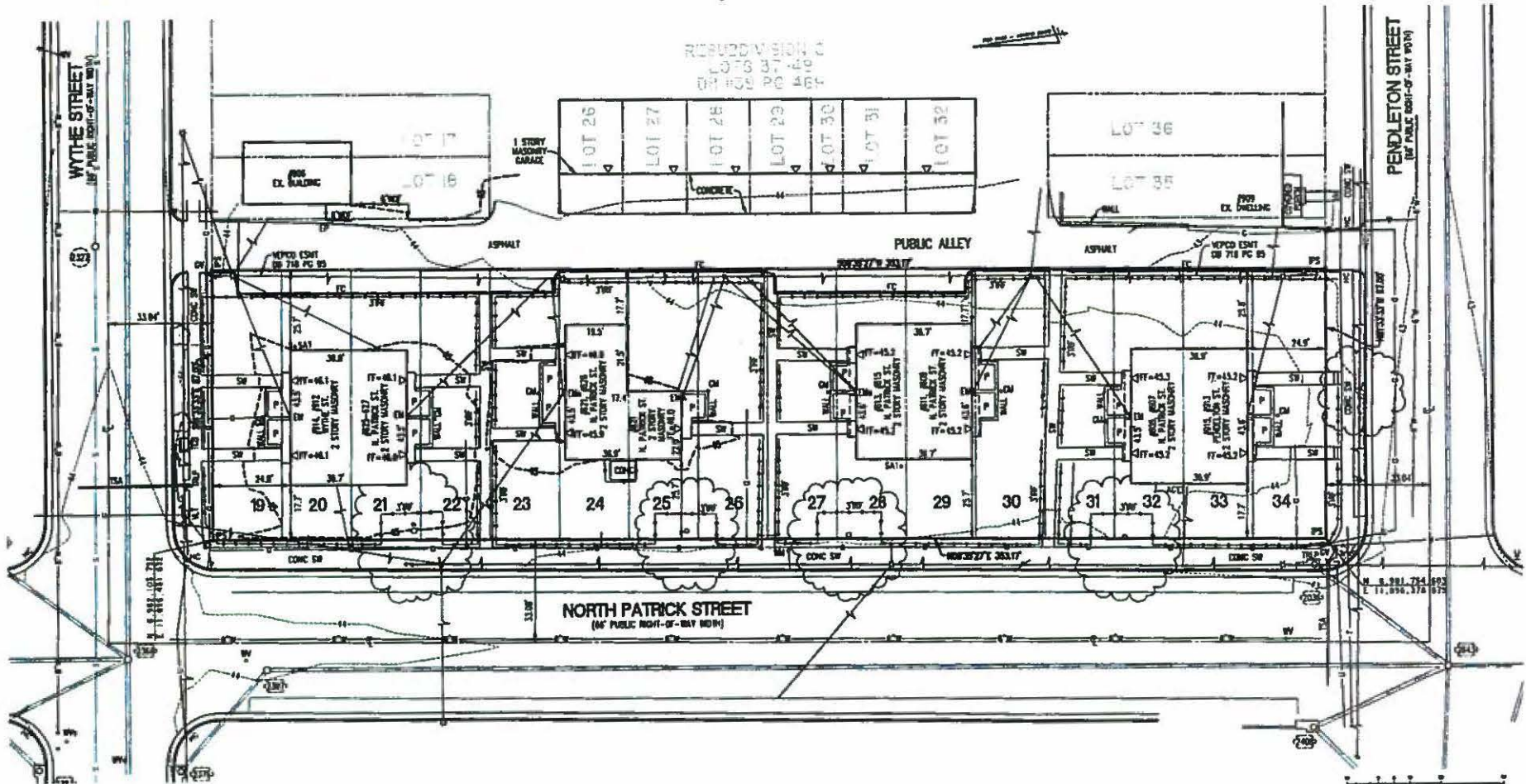
The proposal for the Project includes the removal of all existing improvements and the construction of approximately fifty-three (53) rental units in two-3-story buildings over a below grade parking structure. The Project will be affordable to households with low-moderate incomes up to 50% of the Area Median Income.

### **Description of the alternatives to a Demolition/Encapsulation**

ARHA intends to seek disposition outside the public housing program to privately finance or otherwise develop the existing obsolete units to benefit the City's affordable housing needs and to further the goals of the ARHA 2012-2022 Strategic Plan and the City-adopted Housing Master Plan.

The property's obsolescence, age and deferred maintenance put it at risk of losing the operating subsidy ARHA receives from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under the public housing program. Should HUD withdraw operating subsidy for Ramsey Homes, ARHA would be unable to maintain the property to the standards required by HUD to provide safe and sanitary housing hastening the property's decline.

In a prior memorandum, City staff has expressed its support for the property's demolition and ARHA's redevelopment concept.



RAMSEY HOMES

EXISTING SITE PLAN

8 of 18



WALTER L. PHILLIPS

Land, Carroll & Blair  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, EST. 1978

ALEXANDRIA, VA  
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
07.25.2015

Architecture+Planning  
8909 Westwood Center Dr.  
Suite 300  
Vienna, VA 22182  
703.592.8118  
atgy.com





1 View from alleyway at Wythe St.



2 View from Wythe and N. Patrick Street (Route 1).



3 View along Alley.



4 View from alley.





**RAMSEY HOMES**

**5** View from N. Patrick St.



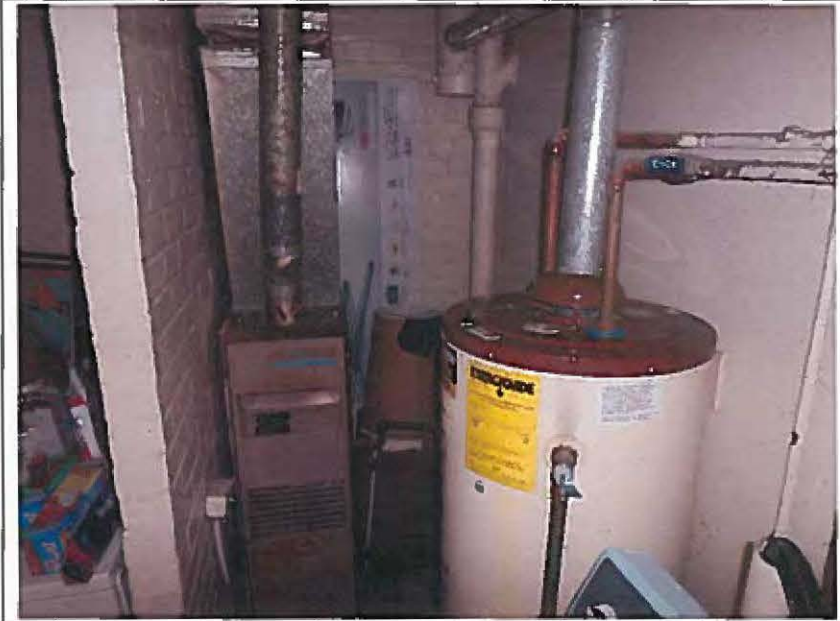
**6** View from Pendleton Street.



**7** View of piping and exposed ductwork at interior.



**8** View of typical kitchen and exposed utilities.



# **ATTACHEMENT 1**

## **SIX (6) CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION**

The Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria provides guidelines for the treatment of historic districts and buildings in Article X. Within this article, Section 10-200 sets forth the guidelines for the Parker-Gray Historic District, which was established to “to protect community health and safety and to promote the education, prosperity and general welfare of the public through the identification, preservation, and enhancement of buildings, structures, settings, features and ways of life which characterize this nineteenth and early twentieth century residential neighborhood”.

If a building within the Parker-Gray Historic District is to be demolished, there are six criteria that must be considered in order for a demolition permit to be granted. The criteria are listed below, with a response to each question provided in *italics*.

1. Is the building or structure of such architectural or historic interest that its removal would be to the detriment of the public interest?

*The four buildings on the Ramsey Homes site are contributing resources to the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District (DHR ID 100-0133; National Register of Historic Places Registration Form 2007). Documentation of Ramsey Homes in V-CRIS (Virginia Cultural Resource Information System) indicates that the Ramsey Homes buildings contribute to the historic district in the areas of social history and architecture, as "an example of the housing constructed with public funds, between 1940 and 1945, for defense workers during World War II." The buildings were later transferred to ARHA in 1953 for use as low-income housing. The Ramsey Homes complex was built in 1942 of pre-cast concrete panels. While it was an early public housing project in Alexandria, the John Roberts Homes (at Oronoco Street, Braddock Road, and West Street) and George Parker (Hopkins-Tancil Court) (at Fairfax, Royal, Princess, and Pendleton Streets), and Samuel Madden Homes (Downtown) at Pendleton, Princess, North Royal, and North Pitt Streets) were all built prior to or concurrently to Ramsey Homes. Parker was also originally built for defense workers. The Ramsey Homes have not been evaluated for their individual National Register eligibility. While they are contributing resources to the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District, they lack individual architectural distinction as a public housing or defense worker housing complex. There have also been alterations to the Ramsey Homes since their original construction in 1942. The most significant of these was the replacement of the original flat roof with hipped roofs, between ca. 1964 and ca. 1983. This change in roofline greatly altered the style and feel of the buildings. In 1995-1996 the windows were replaced, shutters added to the exterior, and porch canopies added over the exterior doors.*

2. Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into an historic shrine?

*The Ramsey Homes are not known to be associated with the active life of a person or group of people significant in our past. Lacking such significance, they could not be made or interpreted as a historic shrine.*

3. Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?

*The period of significance for the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District is ca. 1810-1959. The historic district remained largely vacant through the 1860s, with most of the standing resources built after 1870. The district developed as a largely African American neighborhood in a city that remained mostly segregated through the 1960s. Most of the contributing resources are modest nineteenth century townhouses or row houses and early twentieth century Colonial Revival homes.*

*The Ramsey Homes, while dating from the ca. 1810-1959 period of significance for the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District, are not one of the older resources within the historic district as they were built in 1942. The Ramsey Homes site does not follow the typical narrow townhouse lots of most of the historic district, but rather the extensive open space favored by mid-twentieth century garden-style apartment complexes. These buildings were built using conventional design and materials. The Chinguapin Village, a 300-unit defense worker housing complex in Alexandria, was*



*built using precast concrete methods as Ramsey Homes. The existing plans for these buildings would enable reconstruction.*

4. Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?

*The Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District is significant for the period ca. 1810-1959 under National Register Criterion A for Social History and African American Ethnic Heritage and Criterion C for Architecture. It is an urban historic district with a mixture of building types and architectural styles.*

*The Ramsey Homes are contributing resources to the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District but their demolition will not adversely affect the integrity or significance of this historic district as a whole as they do not have individual architectural merit that distinguishes them through uncommon design, materials, or craftsmanship. The Ramsey Homes were originally built as segregated housing for African Americans. The racial segregation of the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District is one of its areas of significance. While the Ramsey Homes are part of that component of the district's history, there are other resources, such as the Alexandria Black History Museum (the former Robert H. Robinson Library), that better represent this aspect of the community's history.*

5. Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage and making the city a more attractive and desirable place to live?

*The redevelopment of the Ramsey Homes site will allow for the fulfillment of several guiding principles of Alexandria's Housing Master Plan, including the "preservation of affordable housing in transit-oriented, amenity-rich areas" of Alexandria and "promot[ion] the integration of affordable housing as essential to the creation of successful and vibrant mixed-income communities"(City of Alexandria, Office of Housing 2014:xi-xii). The Ramsey Homes are contributing resources to the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District but are not of such significance that they merit individual study beyond the current documentation. .*

6. Would retention of the building or structure help maintain the scale and character of the neighborhood?

*The existing buildings at the Ramsey Homes site are two-story tall, two-bedroom townhomes clustered in four buildings. The residential buildings on adjacent streets range from older two- or three-story townhouses, with newer infill townhouses being three or more stories in height. Nearby civic and public buildings, including churches, and the Charles Houston Recreation Center, tend to have high gable roofs, marking the prominence of these structures in the community. Further away from Ramsey Homes are four- to six-story tall, twenty-first century buildings that reflect greater density of development. The neighborhood surrounding Ramsey Homes includes buildings from a wide range of construction dates, sizes, building heights, and architectural styles.*



# **ATTACHEMENT 2**

## **HISTORY REPORT**





Figure 1. Detail of Magnus' 1863 "Bird's Eye View of Alexandria, VA," showing the project area.

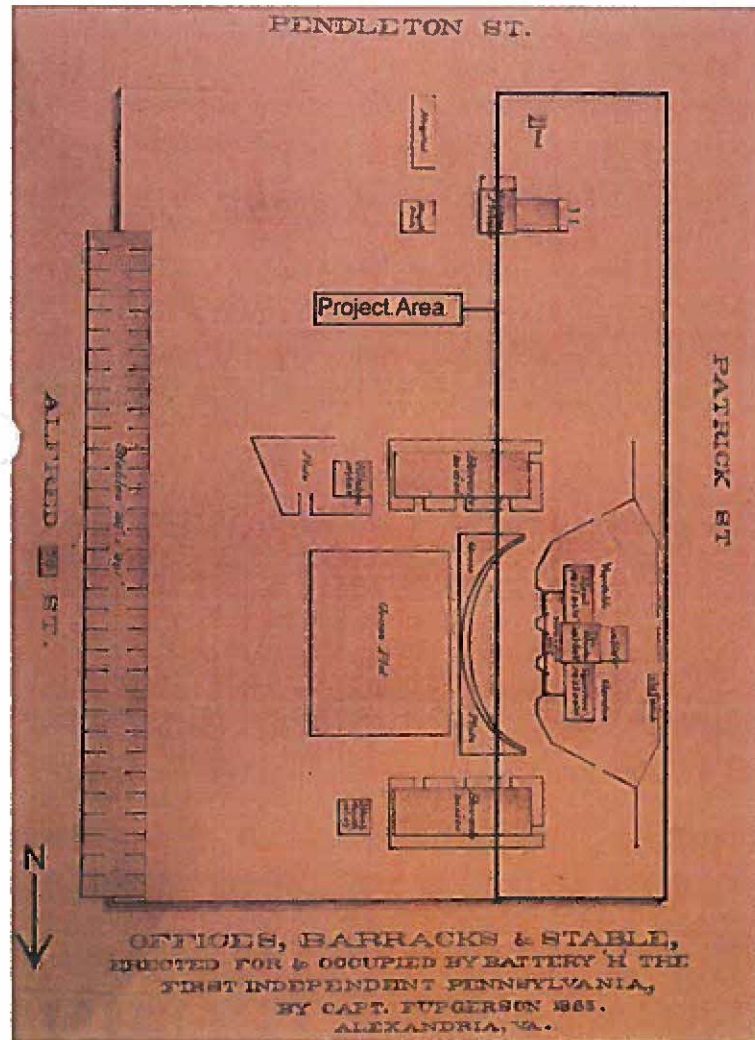


Figure 2. 1865 site plan of the Offices, Barracks, and Stable of Battery H, the First Independent Pennsylvania.

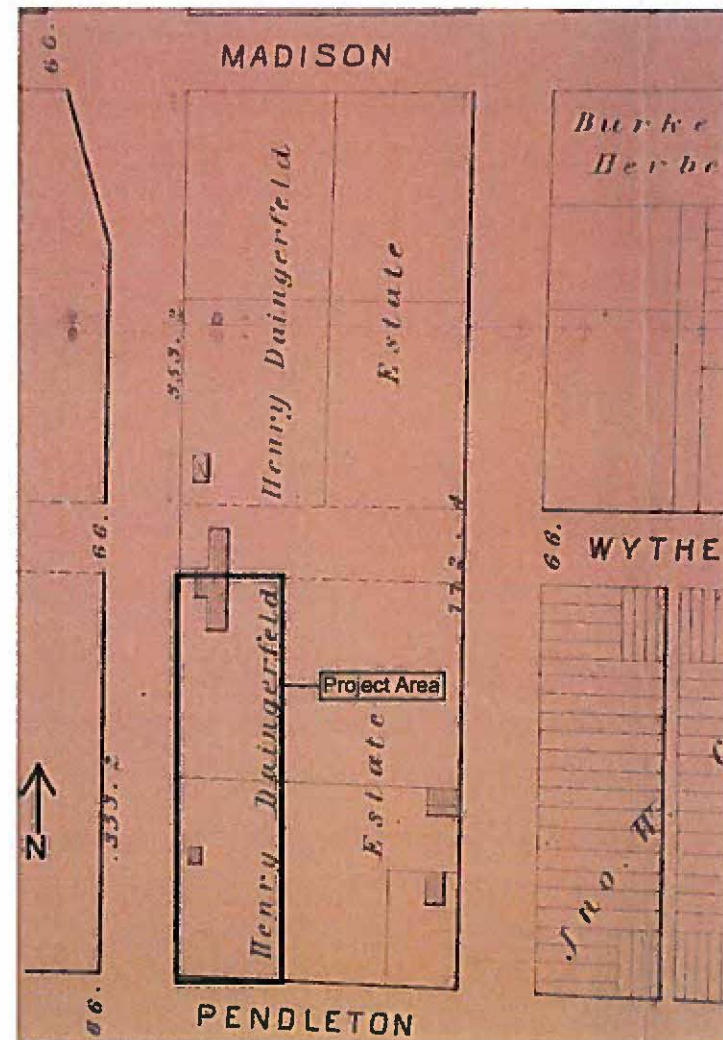


Figure 3. Detail of Hopkin's 1877 *Atlas of Alexandria* showing the project area, showing remnants of the Civil War-era buildings in the project area.

## Summary

Address:	605, 607, 609, 611, 613, 615, 619, 623, 625, and 627 North Patrick Street 913, 915 Pendleton Street 912, 914 Wythe Street
Block:	Western one-third of block bounded by North Alfred, North Patrick, Pendleton, and Wythe Streets
Year built:	1942
Original owner:	Federal Housing Authority
Style:	"Prairie style" per the 2007 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District (100-0133)
Construction:	Pre-cast concrete slabs for floors, wall, and roof
Original Use:	Multi-family residential
Historic Designation:	Contributing resource to the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District (DHR ID 100-0133)
Individual DHR IDs:	100-0133-0745 (605-607 N Patrick Street) 100-0133-0747 (609-611 N Patrick Street) 100-0133-0749 (613-615 N Patrick Street) 100-0133-0751 (619-623 N Patrick Street) 100-0133-0754 (625-627 N Patrick Street) 100-0133-0948 (913-915 Pendleton Street) 100-0133-1328 (912-914 Wythe Street)
Notable Alterations:	Replacement of windows, replacement of roofing materials; additional changes to be determined.
<b>Project Area Land Use History</b>	
Ca. 1863-1865	block bounded by Wythe, North Patrick, Pendleton, and North Alfred Streets used as offices, barracks, and hospital for Battery "H", First Independent Pennsylvania
1923	block bounded by Wythe, North Patrick, Pendleton, and North Alfred Streets subdivided into building lots by Charles King & Son, a wholesale grocery firm in Alexandria.
1941	Project Area acquired by the United States for use as a defense housing project.
1942	Ramsey Houses built for "negro war workers" (Washington Post December 5, 1946:6).
1953	Ramsey Homes property acquired by the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority from the Public Housing Authority.

## RAMSEY HOMES

## HISTORY OF SITE

ALEXANDRIA, VA  
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
01.28.2015

6 of 18



Architecture+Planning  
8605 Westwood Center Dr.  
Suite 300  
Vienna, VA 22182  
703.992.6116  
ktgy.com





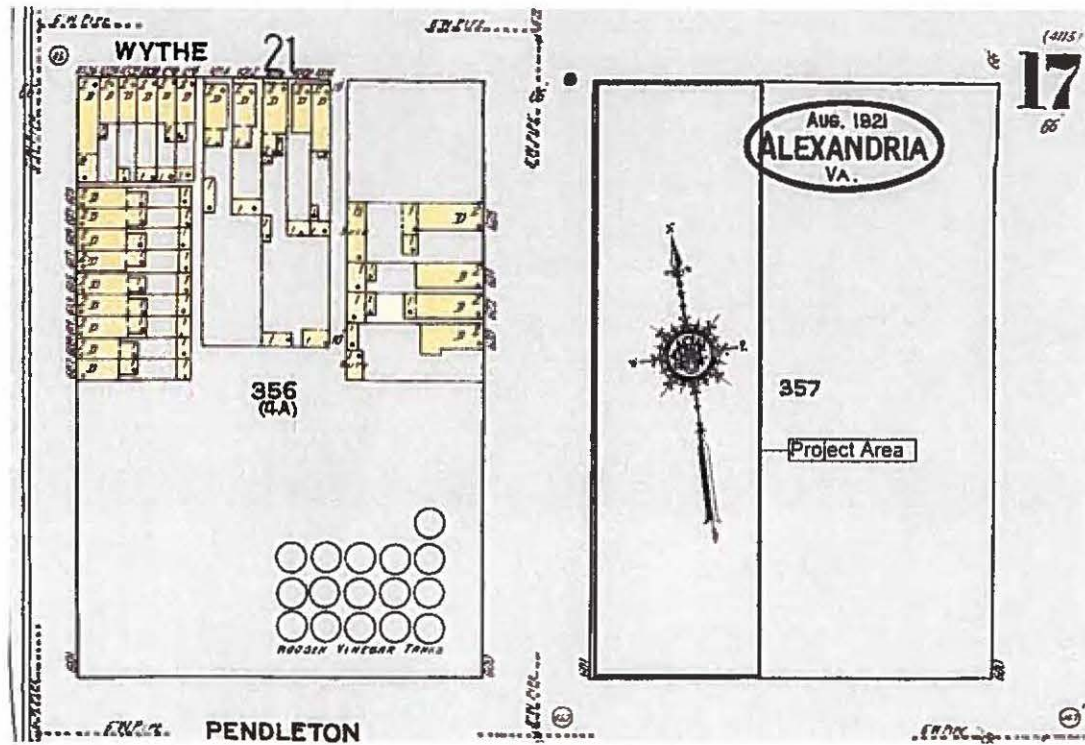


Figure 4. Detail of the 1921 Sanborn map showing the project area as undeveloped.

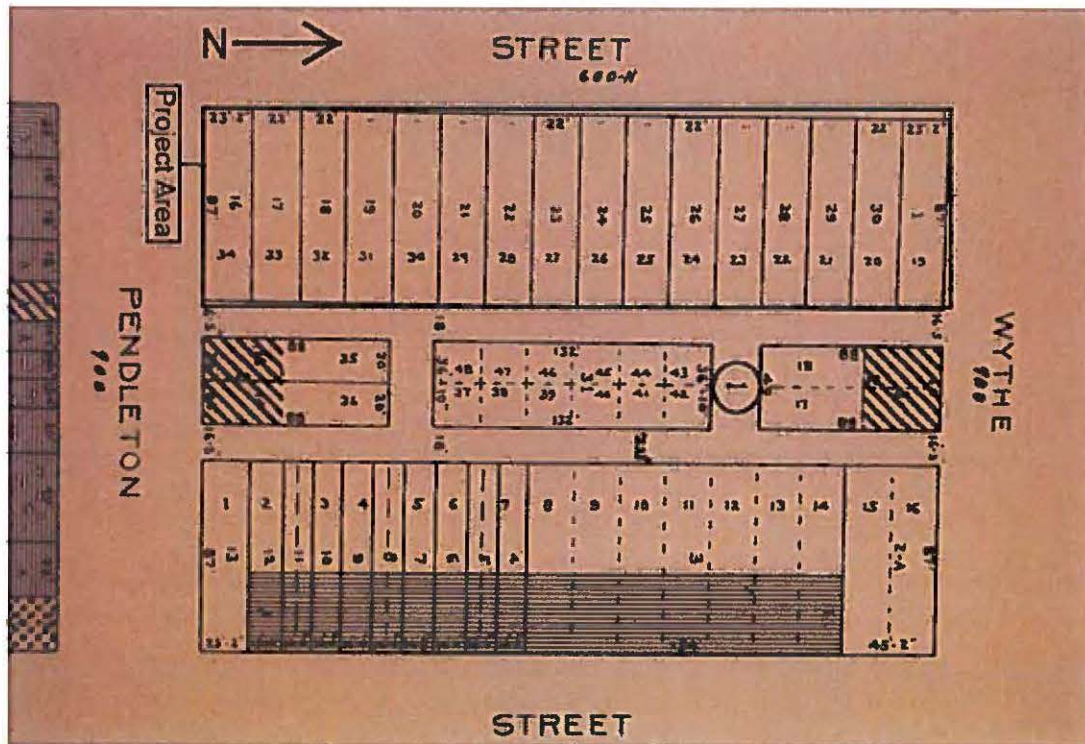


Figure 5. Detail of the 1939 Real Property Survey, Land Use Survey Maps, Alexandria, Virginia showing the project area as undeveloped, but subdivided into building lots.

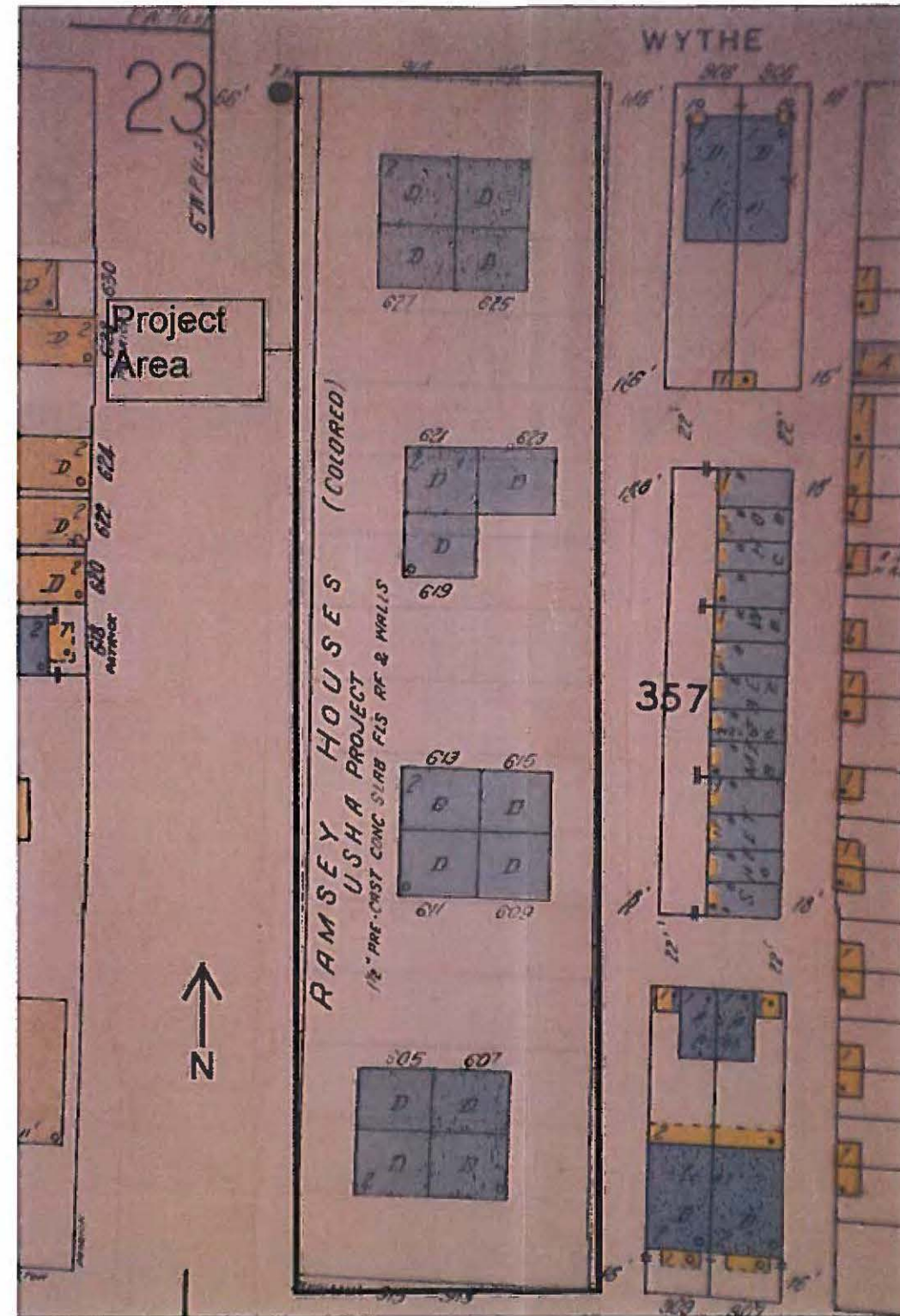


Figure 6. Detail of the 1954 Sanborn map showing the Ramsey Houses as a USHA project (colored).

## RAMSEY HOMES



**WALTER L. PHILLIPS**  
Engineers of record since 1945

**LC & B** Land, Carroll & Blair PC  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, EST. 1978

## HISTORY OF SITE

ALEXANDRIA, VA  
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
01.28.2015

Architecture+Planning  
8605 Westwood Center Dr.  
Suite 300  
Vienna, VA 22182  
703.992.6116  
ktgy.com





BAR Case # 2015-00088ADDRESS OF PROJECT: 699 N. Patrick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (Parcel Address)TAX MAP AND PARCEL: #054.04-12-01 ZONING: RBAPPLICATION FOR: *(Please check all that apply)*

- CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS ~~CONCEPT 2 WORKSESSION~~
- PERMIT TO MOVE, REMOVE, ENCAPSULATE OR DEMOLISH  
(Required if more than 25 square feet of a structure is to be demolished/impacted)
- WAIVER OF VISION CLEARANCE REQUIREMENT and/or YARD REQUIREMENTS IN A VISION CLEARANCE AREA (Section 7-802, Alexandria 1992 Zoning Ordinance)
- WAIVER OF ROOFTOP HVAC SCREENING REQUIREMENT  
(Section 6-403(B)(3), Alexandria 1992 Zoning Ordinance)

Applicant:  Property Owner  Business *(Please provide business name & contact person)*Name: Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing AuthorityAddress: 600 N. Fairfax StreetCity: Alexandria State: VA Zip: 22314Phone: 703-549-7115 x364 E-mail: cstaudinger@arha.usAuthorized Agent *(if applicable)*:  Attorney  Architect  \_\_\_\_\_Name: Duncan Blair Phone: 703-778-1444E-mail: dblair@landcarroll.com**Legal Property Owner:**Name: Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing AuthorityAddress: 600 N. Fairfax StreetCity: Alexandria State: VA Zip: 22314Phone: 703-549-7115 x 364 E-mail: cstaudinger@arha.us

- Yes  No Is there an historic preservation easement on this property?
- Yes  No If yes, has the easement holder agreed to the proposed alterations?
- Yes  No Is there a homeowner's association for this property?
- Yes  No If yes, has the homeowner's association approved the proposed alterations?

If you answered yes to any of the above, please attach a copy of the letter approving the project.

**NATURE OF PROPOSED WORK:** *Please check all that apply*

- NEW CONSTRUCTION
- EXTERIOR ALTERATION: *Please check all that apply.*
  - awning
  - doors
  - lighting
  - other \_\_\_\_\_
  - fence, gate or garden wall
  - windows
  - pergola/trellis
  - HVAC equipment
  - siding
  - painting unpainted masonry
  - shutters
  - shed
- ADDITION
- DEMOLITION/ENCAPSULATION
- SIGNAGE

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK:** *Please describe the proposed work in detail (Additional pages may be attached).*

The Applicant is requesting permission to demolish four obsolete buildings in order to develop new construction of a multi-family low-moderate income residential property.

**SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Items listed below comprise the **minimum supporting materials** for BAR applications. Staff may request additional information during application review. Please refer to the relevant section of the *Design Guidelines* for further information on appropriate treatments.

Applicants must use the checklist below to ensure the application is complete. Include all information and material that are necessary to thoroughly describe the project. Incomplete applications will delay the docketing of the application for review. Pre-application meetings are required for all proposed additions. All applicants are encouraged to meet with staff prior to submission of a completed application.

Electronic copies of submission materials should be submitted whenever possible.

**Demolition/Encapsulation :** *All applicants requesting 25 square feet or more of demolition/encapsulation must complete this section. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.*

- Survey plat showing the extent of the proposed demolition/encapsulation.
- Existing elevation drawings clearly showing all elements proposed for demolition/encapsulation.
- Clear and labeled photographs of all elevations of the building if the entire structure is proposed to be demolished.
- Description of the reason for demolition/encapsulation.
- Description of the alternatives to demolition/encapsulation and why such alternatives are not considered feasible.



**Additions & New Construction:** *Drawings must be to scale and should not exceed 11" x 17" unless approved by staff. All plans must be folded and collated into 3 complete 8 1/2" x 11" sets. Additional copies may be requested by staff for large-scale development projects or projects fronting Washington Street. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.*

- N/A
- Scaled survey plat showing dimensions of lot and location of existing building and other structures on the lot, location of proposed structure or addition, dimensions of existing structure(s), proposed addition or new construction, and all exterior, ground and roof mounted equipment.
  - FAR & Open Space calculation form.
  - Clear and labeled photographs of the site, surrounding properties and existing structures, if applicable.
  - Existing elevations must be scaled and include dimensions.
  - Proposed elevations must be scaled and include dimensions. Include the relationship to adjacent structures in plan and elevations.
  - Materials and colors to be used must be specified and delineated on the drawings. Actual samples may be provided or required.
  - Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
  - For development site plan projects, a model showing mass relationships to adjacent properties and structures.

**Signs & Awnings:** *One sign per building under one square foot does not require BAR approval unless illuminated. All other signs including window signs require BAR approval. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.*

- N/A
- Linear feet of building: Front: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary front (if corner lot): \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Square feet of existing signs to remain: \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Photograph of building showing existing conditions.
  - Dimensioned drawings of proposed sign identifying materials, color, lettering style and text.
  - Location of sign (show exact location on building including the height above sidewalk).
  - Means of attachment (drawing or manufacturer's cut sheet of bracket if applicable).
  - Description of lighting (if applicable). Include manufacturer's cut sheet for any new lighting fixtures and information detailing how it will be attached to the building's facade.

**Alterations:** *Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.*

- N/A
- Clear and labeled photographs of the site, especially the area being impacted by the alterations, all sides of the building and any pertinent details.
  - Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
  - Drawings accurately representing the changes to the proposed structure, including materials and overall dimensions. Drawings must be to scale.
  - An official survey plat showing the proposed locations of HVAC units, fences, and sheds.
  - Historic elevations or photographs should accompany any request to return a structure to an earlier appearance.

**ALL APPLICATIONS:** *Please read and check that you have read and understand the following items:*

- I have submitted a filing fee with this application. (Checks should be made payable to the City of Alexandria. Please contact staff for assistance in determining the appropriate fee.)
- I understand the notice requirements and will return a copy of the three respective notice forms to BAR staff at least five days prior to the hearing. If I am unsure to whom I should send notice I will contact Planning and Zoning staff for assistance in identifying adjacent parcels.
- I, the applicant, or an authorized representative will be present at the public hearing.
- I understand that any revisions to this initial application submission (including applications deferred for restudy) must be accompanied by the BAR Supplemental form and 3 sets of revised materials.

---

The undersigned hereby attests that all of the information herein provided including the site plan, building elevations, prospective drawings of the project, and written descriptive information are true, correct and accurate. The undersigned further understands that, should such information be found incorrect, any action taken by the Board based on such information may be invalidated. The undersigned also hereby grants the City of Alexandria permission to post placard notice as required by Article XI, Division A, Section 11-301(B) of the 1992 Alexandria City Zoning Ordinance, on the property which is the subject of this application. The undersigned also hereby authorizes the City staff and members of the BAR to inspect this site as necessary in the course of research and evaluating the application. The applicant, if other than the property owner, also attests that he/she has obtained permission from the property owner to make this application.

**APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT:**

Signature: 

Printed Name: Roy O. Priest, CEO, ARHA

Date: 04/03/15

**OWNERSHIP AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

Use additional sheets if necessary

**1. Applicant.** State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1. Alex. Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA)	600 N. Fairfax Street Alexandria, VA 22314	100%
2.		
3.		

**2. Property.** State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the property located at 699 N. Patrick Street (address), unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1. ARHA	600 N. Fairfax Street Alexandria, VA 22314	100%
2.		
3.		

**3. Business or Financial Relationships.** Each person or entity listed above (1 and 2), with an ownership interest in the applicant or in the subject property is required to disclose any business or financial relationship, as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance, existing at the time of this application, or within the 12-month period prior to the submission of this application with any member of the Alexandria City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals or either Boards of Architectural Review.

Name of person or entity	Relationship as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance	Member of the Approving Body (i.e. City Council, Planning Commission, etc.)
1. ARHA	None	P.C. and C.C.
2.		
3.		

**NOTE: Business or financial relationships of the type described in Sec. 11-350 that arise after the filing of this application and before each public hearing must be disclosed prior to the public hearings.**

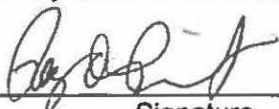
As the applicant or the applicant's authorized agent, I hereby attest to the best of my ability that the information provided above is true and correct.

04/03/15

Date

Roy O. Priest, CEO, ARHA

Printed Name

  
Signature