

*******DRAFT MINUTES*******

Alexandria Board of Architectural Review
Parker-Gray District

Wednesday, April 24, 2013

7:30pm, Sister Cities Conference Room, City Hall
301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Members Present: William Conkey, Chairman
Purvi Irwin
Brendan Owens
Matthew Slowick
Theresa del Ninno
Philip Moffat

Members Absent: Robert Duffy, Vice-Chairman

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning
Stephanie Sample, Historic Preservation Planner
Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairman Conkey.

I. MINUTES

Consideration of the minutes of the public hearing of March 13, 2013.

BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 5-0.

On a motion by Mr. Owens, seconded by Mr. Slowick, the minutes were approved, as amended, 5-0 (Mr. Moffat was absent for this vote.)

II. UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND ITEMS PREVIOUSLY DEFERRED

1. **CASE BAR2013-0036**

Request for alterations at 1015 Princess Street

APPLICANT: Brian Thomas

BOARD ACTION: Deferred for restudy, 5-1.

SPEAKERS

Brian Thomas, contractor representing the property owners, spoke in support of the project. Mr. Thomas acknowledged installing the vinyl windows when he renovated the property but asserted that he should have been notified that he was located in a historic district and the replacement windows needed BAR approval. Mr. Thomas proposed replacing the existing vinyl, sandwich muntin windows with new vinyl windows with exterior muntins. He brought a sample of the proposed vinyl window to the meeting.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Mr. Owens said that the proposed new window was not consistent with the recently adopted Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide. He said that the Board's strategy should be to bring the building into compliance. He apologized to the home owners who unknowingly purchased a house with windows which are not in compliance with BAR policy.

Ms. Irwin said that the new windows proposed by Mr. Thomas only address the sandwich muntin issue and not the issue of the vinyl window material. She said that windows are an important issue for the BAR.

Ms. del Ninno said that she did not generally like pocket windows but that the Board has recently approved fiberglass insert windows, which she said she might be able to support in this case.

Mr. Moffat said that he thought that the applicant should have been aware of the BAR requirements since he was present at the BAR hearing for the Permit to Demolish. He said that the Board and the work group had lengthy discussions about appropriate windows and that they felt that vinyl windows were not appropriate for Early buildings. He said that it was not fair to blame a Code Administration inspector for not noticing the window replacements because they were never included in the building permit.

Mr. Slowick said he could support fiberglass windows instead of vinyl windows.

Mr. Conkey said that he did not think a deferral would accomplish anything because the facts of the case would not change. He said he could not support vinyl windows.

On a motion by Mr. Slowick, seconded by Ms. del Ninno, the Board voted to defer the application for further study.

REASON:

Most members of the Board felt that vinyl windows, including the vinyl windows with exterior muntins proposed by the applicant, were not appropriate for an Early building. They noted that the discussions of the work group over the past year made it clear that inappropriate replacement windows were not acceptable for Early buildings. The potential for using fiberglass windows instead of wood windows on the front façade was discussed by some of the Board members, although the fiberglass windows that were recently approved by the BAR were on the sides of an Early building, not the front façade. The Board deferred the application in order to give the builder time to research the Marvin Infinity fiberglass windows discussed at the meeting.

2. **CASE BAR2012-0415**

Request new construction at 813 Princess Street

APPLICANT: Princess & Alfred LLC by Stephen Kulinski

BOARD ACTION:

SPEAKERS

Duncan Blair, attorney for the applicant, spoke summarized the project's scope and expressed the applicant's support for the staff recommendations.

Wayne Neale, architect, OHAD Board Member and adjacent property owner, endorsed the project and noted that he felt that the owner has the right to design the architecture of the buildings as traditional or contemporary, as long as the mass and scale of the buildings are compatible with the historic district.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Ms. DelNinno commenced the Board's discussion by noting that in general she supports the project, but noted that if the architect was electing to design a traditional building, then the applicant should pick a style and be consistent with its architectural vocabulary. She also expressed concern with the proposed placement of the mechanical units on the center unit and their visibility from Alfred Street.

Mr. Moffit expressed support for the applicant's use of traditional architecture, noting that in his opinion not every architect is comfortable with designing contemporary architecture. He noted that the rear elevation was bizarre due to the applicant's choice to utilize different building materials and window configurations on the rear elevations. He also stated that the one historic resource on this block was going to be located in the backyards of the new buildings.

Mr. Slowik identified that he appreciated the architect's design of the front elevation, and noted that the rear elevations were a concern, but expressed that he would not want to see the front elevations sacrificed to address the Board's concerns in the rear.

Ms. Irvin noted that her thoughts about the project have not changed since the worksession. She documented her concern with recreating replicas [of historic architecture] as she believes that this dilutes the historic district. She expressed that she feels that this new construction is an opportunity to do something fresh and modern within the historic district as she wants to see the City to continue to grow architecturally.

Mr. Owens also expressed support of the project and reiterated his colleagues concerns with the rear elevations noting there was potentially an increase in cost, but that these elevations were very visible. He also noted that he liked the idea of open space. He specified that on the center townhouse the north mass's elevation could be lowered to reduce bulk.

Chairman Conkey concurred with Ms. Irvin's comments that he feels that mimicking historic structures is detrimental to the historic fabric of the district and documented that he cannot support the project.

Phil Moffit recommended a motion to defer the application with a recommendation that the applicant study the rear elevations, provide materials samples and refine the details.

Mr. Blair requested that the Board consider approving the building footprint, site layout and foundation to grade design and deferring the other items, so the applicant can move forward with their site plan submission.

Mr. Owens recommended a modification to the motion on the table, which included approval of the site layout and a portion of the building to include foundation to grade with the deferral of the rest of the design in order for the applicant to study the height of the roof of the center townhouse, the materials on the rear elevations, and the architectural details as well as provide material samples. The modification of the motion was supported by Mr. Moffit, and seconded by Mr. Slowik, the Board voted to defer the application for further study 6-0.

REASON:

The majority of the Board felt that the applicant needed to continue to work on the design and detailing and provide additional information on the proposed materials to be used before they were ready to take an action on the case.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Ms. Sample told the Board that the text amendment to Section 10-200 (Parker-Gray District) of the zoning ordinance was going forward to Planning Commission and City Council in June. Ms. Sample told the Board that they would see the draft language at the May meeting.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Conkey adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:30pm.

Minutes submitted by,

Stephanie Sample, Historic Preservation Planner
Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner
Boards of Architectural Review