DOCKET ITEM # 4

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 21, 2015

TO: CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
OLD AND HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

FROM: HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

SUBJECT: 5th CONCEPT REVIEW OF 2 DUKE STREET
(FORMERLY ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH)
BAR CASE # 2014-0113

I. BACKGROUND

On April 30, July 2, October 15, and December 17, 2014, the Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD) Board of Architectural Review held informal concept review work sessions with public testimony. At the April 30th work session, the Board was introduced to the project site, the applicable Waterfront Small Area Plan guidelines and objectives for this block, and the design program of the development team. At that time, the Board generally supported the proposed height, scale, mass and general site layout with some specific comments for further study and direction. At the July 2nd work session, the applicant introduced the proposed architectural style and character for the project, showing more traditional early 20th century waterfront warehouse-inspired designs for the townhouses adjacent to Duke and South Union streets and a very contemporary approach to the waterfront-facing multifamily buildings. The Board supported the concept of smaller, more traditional masonry buildings on the west side of the site facing the historic district with more glass and contemporary character facing the river but expressed serious concerns with architecture that had such forms and materials for the waterfront multifamily buildings that did not relate to Alexandria and advised the applicant to do a restudy.

At the October 15th work session, the applicant showed refinements and new directions based on the Board's previous comments particularly with respect to: a desire for greater differentiation between Buildings 1 and 2 on the waterfront, restudy of the architectural character of Building 3 on Wolfe Street and further refinement of the townhouses. At the December 17th work session the majority of the Board reaffirmed their support of the overall site plan, the character and scale of the townhouses and the form and character of the waterfront buildings but particularly emphasized the need to further work on Building 3 on Wolfe Street, including increased upper level setbacks and greater articulation of the massing on the south elevation. They requested that the applicant return to the BAR with a revised design for Building 3 that included significant

upper floor setbacks. At the December 17th hearing, the Board also approved Permits to Demolish for the existing mid-20th century warehouse buidlings.

The approved minutes of the most recent work session on December 17th follows as Attachment #1.

At the four previous concept review work sessions, the Board affirmed that the architectural design and character of the project should clearly read as being *of Alexandria*. The Board stated a clear preference for wanting buildings that were locally influenced and rooted and were not generic or trendy magazine-inspired designs that could be seen anywhere in the world. The Board reiterated that a contemporary design, albeit connected to the historic architectural traditions of the Alexandria waterfront, could be appropriate for these waterfront buildings.

As the Board has already expressed general support for the revised townhouses, the two waterfront buildings and the overall project direction, with the exception of Building 3 on Wolfe Street, the focus of this fifth, and likely final, concept review work session will be exclusively on Building 3. For general discussion on other elements of this project, please reference the previous reports which will be linked on the City website.

It is anticipated that Planning Commission and City Council will review the Development Special Use Permit and related applications in March 2015 and the project will then return to the BAR for approval of separate Certificates of Appropriateness for each of the nine buildings.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff strongly supports the revised design, overall, and finds that many of the Board's previous comments have been addressed with this most recent version of the design. Over the course of the review process, the identity of Building 3 has always struggled. As a multi-family building on the southwest corner of the site, it tried to mediate a relationship between the glassier waterfront buildings to the east, the more traditionally-inspired townhouses to the north, and the existing non-historic late 20th century townhouses to the south and west. Additionally, while the entire site, being located on the Alexandria waterfront, is important, much of the design focus in the earlier work sessions was on the waterfront buildings, particularly Building 1 at the northeast corner, and the treatment of the historic warehouse at 2 Duke Street and how it related to the overall project. Unfortunately, the result was that the identity of Building #3 lagged behind in the design review process. However, the recent revisions reflect both an appropriate scale and massing configuration as well as a clear architectural expression.

Previously, this building read as one large multi-family building that, although no taller than many of the adjacent existing townhouses to the south, was visually jarring. Further, the architectural character of the building never felt clearly articulated and it related more to the two waterfront buildings than the nearby townhouses. The current revisions maintain the building as a functioning multifamily building but the western two thirds of the building is now a series of four townhouse scale forms reflected through four, three story projecting brick façades and, therefore, the perceived scale, though not the architectural style, relates much better to the buildings across Wolfe Street. The easternmost third of the building, adjacent to Building 2 on the waterfront, appears as a small multifamily building to mediate the transition between the

waterfront multifamily buildings and this new townhouse framework and is proposed to be a different color brick.

Additionally, the scale of Building #3 has been entirely changed as there is a clear and physical break above the third story (see Building #3 Plan Comparison on Sheet 14). This is achieved by a set back at the fourth story (3') and an even greater set back (ranging from 8'- 10" to 12'- 0") at the fifth story on Wolfe Street. Since the last iteration, presented at work session #4, there has been no increased set back at the fourth story on South Union Street and at the fifth story the set back is 6'- 6". Staff notes that the shift in scale and architectural form is more successful on Wolfe Street and clearly addresses the setback requirements of the Potomac River Vicinity Height District. The combination of the increased upper floor set backs and incorporation of a townhouse rhythm and scale generally results in a much more balanced and appropriate building for this particular location. As this building will be experienced on all four sides, there is also a greater cohesion to the building among all four elevations.

However, to improve the overall cohesion of the building and to improve the transitional relationship with the adjacent block faces, staff recommends that meaningful set backs be added on South Union Street, proportionally similar to what the applicant has done on Wolfe Street. This upper level setback is particularly important on the west end of Building #3, as South Union Street is only 50' wide, where Wolfe Street is a 66' right of way more typical of historic Old Town.

At the previous work sessions, it was recommended by some that the applicant pursue a gable roof form with dormers to provide a shift in scale and variety in roof forms and townhouse scale detail. The applicant prepared a graphic (Sheet 15) which shows that although no literal gable roof forms or dormers have been introduced, the effect of a sloped roof—reducing the perceived overall height at the street level by reducing solid wall surface at the front elevation—is generally achieved by varied set backs at the fourth and fifth stories and the articulation at these floors provides the shade, shadow and skyline articulation provided by dormers. These meaningful set backs have greatly improved the height of the building, as experienced by pedestrians at the street level, as well as have resulted in a more cohesive architectural design that is compatible not only with the overall project but also the historic district as a whole.

Previous comments made by the Board and the public also advocated for a more residential character and details on this particular building. As this is still concept phase, many architectural details remain to be worked through and decided. However, staff recommends that residential elements, such as artistic metal work at the balconies, appropriate lighting, defined entrances and stoops, be pursued to both distinguish this particular building from others in the project and to contribute to a stronger, smaller scale residential character.

Finally, the Waterfront Plan calls for historic interpretation to be integral with the overall project design and that art and history be more than just interpretive sign panels. While the adaptive use of 2 Duke Street and the masts and sail forms of the waterfront buildings contribute toward this end, it is not enough. Staff is working with the applicant and art and history representatives from the Waterfront Commission but concepts for three dimensional historic interpretation are not yet developed and will come back to the BAR during Certificate of Appropriateness review.

III. SUMMARY

Additional Standards to Consider for a Certificate of Appropriateness in the Potomac River Vicinity

As discussed in all previous concept review reports, in addition to the general BAR standards outlined in the Zoning Ordinance, and the Board's *Design Guidelines*, the Board must also find that the Potomac River Vicinity Standards are met prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness. A project located along the waterfront is subject to a higher level of scrutiny and design due to its prominent location. Staff believes that at this point in the process, the applicant has shown that its project will be able to satisfy this higher level of scrutiny and result in a timeless design rooted in Alexandria's strong waterfront architectural traditions.

Next Steps

It is still anticipated that the proposal may be reviewed by Planning Commission and City Council in late winter of 2015. Following City Council approval, the applicant will then return to the BAR with a formal application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for final design details and materials.

Staff notes that this project has undergone a much greater level of scrutiny than previous concept reviews and reminds the BAR that its focus at this time is still only height, scale, mass and general architectural character. Staff reminds the Board that design details, materials and colors can be worked through as part of the Certificate of Appropriateness, noting that the architect will continue to refine and improve the design in the interim.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

At this time, staff recommends that the Board find that the height, scale, mass and general architectural character of the overall project are appropriate and endorse the project for review by the City Council with the condition that increased fourth and fifth story set backs be employed on the west elevation of Building #3 on South Union Street, similar in scale to those shown on Wolfe Street, and that additional interpretation of the site and waterfront history be incorporated prior to application for Certificate of Appropriateness.

STAFF

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

ATTACHMENTS

1 – Approved Minutes from Concept Review Work Session #4 (12/17/14)
2 – Supporting Materials for Concept Review Work Session #5

ATTACHMENT 1

MINUTES FROM THE WORK SESSION ON DECEMBER 17, 2014

SPEAKERS

Bob Youngentob of EYA, applicant, introduced the project and gave an overview of the changes made since the last work session. The key areas where changes were made included: 1) building 1 as a gateway from the north promenade, 2) increased emphasis on the required transition/set back about 30 feet, 3) increased alley width to the west of 2 Duke Street, 4) increased variety among the townhouses, 5) more color variety for brick, and 6) revisions to building 3 on Wolfe Street. He requested that the Board make a finding of support for the concept plan.

Shalom Baranes, project architect, explained the changes made to the three multifamily buildings since the last work session. He showed how the waterfront elevations were more strongly articulated and how the 30' mark was expressed at the floor slab and with recessed glass above. He explained that the masts were shown at 15' and 18' above the roofline and noted that they would not make sense if they were less than 15'. Building 1 now wrapped the corner to the north and featured additional brick. He explained that for Building 3, the fourth and fifth stories were now set back farther, especially at the corner of Wolfe and South Union streets. He also showed how the 30' mandate was further emphasized on Wolfe Street.

Patrick Burkhart, project architect, explained the changes made to the townhouses to increase variety in architectural character and roof variety and changes at the loft level. He showed the additional brick samples and how the beige and gray brick would work together.

Van Van Fleet, president of the Old Town Civic Association, thought the project was inappropriate and not connected to the historic district.

Bert Ely, member of Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront, supported Mr. Van Fleet's comments. He expressed concern that the architectural renderings did not adequately illustrate the context.

Greg Hudgins, Alexandria resident and involved citizen, spoke in strong support of the project and commended the architectural team.

Jan Rivenburg, 606 South Pitt Street resident, thought the project was too massive and too tall. She said it did not support Old Town's unique character.

Albert Schlachtmeyer, resident at The Oronoco, spoke in support of the entire project and advocated looking forward rather than back for design inspiration.

Bob Wood, Union Street resident, expressed concern about the BAR concept review process.

Tim Morgan, South Union Street resident, expressed concern about the BAR process. He thought that the building 3 was too tall and out of scale.

Scott Anderson, Alexandria resident and member of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Commission, spoke in support of the project and found it evoked the architecture of Old Town and had a human scale.

Peter and Holly Kilcullen, residents at Harborside, noted that their thoughts were expressed in the Harborside Community Letter. They also thought that the design was not appropriate, that the project was not in conformance with the Small Area Plan and that building 3 should be reduced.

Jaime Steve, 325 North Saint Asaph Street, spoke against the character of the river side elevation of the project.

Ted Pulliam, resident, requested that the applicant include information about the proposed interpretation of the site's history.

Windsor Demaine, 6 Wolfe Street, advised taking the time to carefully study the design options and thought the proposal was a reiteration of other developments in the DC area.

Christine Sennett, Cameron Street resident and real estate agent in Alexandria, observed that people are interested in either contemporary or historic buildings but not new buildings meant to look old.

Susan Askew, 34 Wolfe Street, explained that the Harborside Community Letter represented over 100 people and 76 households, 40% of whom lived outside of Harborside but in the nearby area. She noted that she and her neighbors supported development and getting rid of the warehouses but that they were concerned about the mass and scale of building 3. She requested setbacks at the upper floors along the length of Wolfe Street. She also requested that the entire ground floor be set back as well.

Karen Devlin, 20 Wolfe Street, requested further study to have a more fitting design that would have more architectural variety. She thought the mass and scale were overwhelming.

Louise Roseman, Harborside resident, stated that there should be a significant setback from Wolfe Street, as well as a wider sidewalk and the addition of plantings.

Carl Smith, 200 Duke Street, supported the Harborside Community Letter and the previous speakers.

Hal Hardaway, 311 South Union Street, expressed concern about the architectural character, mass and scale.

Kathryn Papp, 504 Cameron Street, expressed concern about the project, finding it too radical for the Old and Historic Alexandria District.

Rob Duggar, 10 Wolfe Street, loved the design but thought the process was flawed. He wanted to see a "boat's-eye" view of the proposal.

Hank Savage, resident at Waterford Place, said that it was too radical for Old Town and that we needed to safeguard what was here. He recommended meeting with community groups.

Michael Jennings, 10 Potomac Court, suggested dividing building 3 into two or three modules.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Chairman Fitzgerald noted that many comments had been made about mass and scale but that he thought most people were really concerned about the 50 foot height. He asked for staff to provide some background on the 50 foot height limit. Mr. Cox explained how the height limit on the waterfront had previously been 77 feet but was lowered in 1987 to 50 feet. In 1992, it was lowered to 30 feet but there was a provision that allowed for 50 feet with a special use permit and an unspecified setback transition above 30 feet.

Chairman Fitzgerald also explained that the decision to allow 50 foot buildings had already been made as part of the Waterfront Small Area Plan. Regarding compatibility in the historic district, he noted that the majority of townhouses were actually Victorian and 20-century, noting that there were very few colonial period buildings remaining. He stated that details and setbacks can be worked out.

Ms. Roberts asked whether the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) had been issued. Mr. Cox responded that it had not but that the Waterfront Plan indicated 50 foot buildings on this site.

Mr. von Senden observed that people say "look outside the box" and then when that is done, people are chagrined. He thought that there had been a lot of good discussion about the glass. He liked the high masts, as a reflection of the maritime heritage. He thought that the north side of building 1 had been improved as had the overall color palette. He appreciated the increased width of the alley adjacent to 2 Duke Street. He favored the slate shingles on the walls of the townhouse penthouses. He thought that the townhouse schemes captured the formality of Old Town but with a modern interpretation. Regarding scale and mass, he noted that it was not out of scale with Harborside which had roof heights above 50 feet. He thought that the 30 foot transition may be too subtle and suggested that more effort be made on the transition and set back on Wolfe Street, particularly at the fifth floor. He thought that setting the entire building back would not be successful. He summarized by stating that Alexandria was not a museum and that buildings were continually being modified.

Ms. Finnigan noted that she heard three themes from the comments made by the public: building 3, glass, and roof forms. First, an appropriate compromise should be found for building 3. She wanted to see the staff sketch with a suggested upper floor setback taken even farther. She thought that glass was appropriate for the waterfront buildings and she liked the mast features. She continued to want to see more playful and varied roof forms. While she liked many of the changes proposed for 2 Duke Street she did not think that the canopy was a welcoming entry feature.

Mr. Neale noted that he had lived in Alexandria since 1977 and had absorbed a lot of Old Town's character. He generally agreed with the proposed density, mass and scale but found that its distribution over the site to be problematic. He observed that the condo buildings had small

footprints but that they were articulated as larger buildings and so recommended that the elevations be more reflective of the plans. At the Wolfe Street corner of building 3 he expressed concern about the height of the building and the articulation of the façade. He recommended sloping roofs without having to reduce density. He thought that the site plan would feel sterile with the same distance between all the buildings and recommended shifting some of the density from the upper floors to lower floors. He thought that smaller distances between lower buildings could still feel comfortable, similar to alleys between historic buildings in Old Town. He thought that some fundamental elements should be added to the scheme to better integrate with Old Town. He liked the basic organization of the project. He noted that many good comments had been made.

Ms. Miller stated that she was in agreement with Mr. Neale's comments and sympathetic to the concerns expressed by the community. She stated that building 3 was a concern, as it overwhelmed the site. She wanted to see it divided into two buildings or to otherwise rearrange the density on the site. She thought the majority of the site organization was fine. She recommended that the applicant study the view of building 3 from Windmill Hill Park and Ford's Landing looking north. She liked the masts for the waterfront buildings.

Ms. Roberts appreciated some of the refinements that had been made. She thought building 5 on Union Street had been improved but wanted the building to feel more natural by better integrating the loft levels. She believed Duke Street had the best blockface of the project because of its variety. She was interested in seeing a bird's eye view of the project and asked why there was not a model to show the context of the project with respect to the adjacent buildings. She also supported making building 3 into two buildings to reduce the overall mass, finding that it currently appeared too hulking and masculine. She noted that the waterfront buildings can support more glass but building 3 was not on the water and needed to reflect the adjacent residential neighborhood. She also liked taking off the top floor and reallocating the floor area to the interior of the site. She was warming up to buildings 1 and 2 on the waterfront but recommended a more defined and strengthened delineation at 30 feet. She also requested more information on historic interpretation elements for the next concept review.

Mr. Carlin supported a more playful and angular roof form in some areas, without being 1980s cliché, and noted it seemed that both the BAR and community would like that. He noted that the applicant had made substantial progress along the way. He viewed the project as having big buildings (multifamily) and little buildings (townhouses). He cautioned against the townhouses having a monolithic or institutional feel. He wanted to see more "distinguishment" for the townhouses, such as the addition of bay windows. He thought that the treatment of building 3 had progressed significantly. He recommended studying an angled, all-glass roof for building 3 because it would be contemporary but allude to forms that the community was comfortable with. Overall, he liked the treatment of building 3 from the fourth story down. He also wanted to see more landscaping and plantings on Wolfe Street. He liked the masts on the waterfront buildings and the sense of movement on the site. He also recommended varying the tops of the waterfront buildings, here and there.

Chairman Fitzgerald complimented the architect for being responsive to a range of comments but he cautioned against making too many changes to what was a generally good design. He noted that there were three options for moving forward but that people seemed to really want a final

work session. He thought that the northeast and southwest corners of the site, at building 1 and 3, could be refined further. He noted that the biggest concern was the south elevation of building 3. He recommended a substantial setback on the entire top floor. He noted the applicant had some support from the BAR and community. Mr. Carlin made a motion to defer the project for restudy at a fifth work session based on BAR and citizen comments.

****

(End of Minutes)

ATTACHMENT #2

ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH

Alexandria, VA

BAR Work Session No. 5 Submission

January 06, 2015

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DEVELOPMENT TEAM

- **Developer:** EYA
- **Equity Partner:** JBG
- **Architect:** Shalom Baranes Associates
- **Landscape Architect:** M. Paul Freidberg Partners
- **Land Use Counsel:** McGuireWoods
- **Civil Engineer:** Bohler
- **Marine Engineer**: Moffat & Nichol
- **Traffic & Parking:** Wells and Associates
- **Acoustical Engineer:** Polysonics
- **Archeological:** Wetlands Studies & Solutions
- **Historian:** History Matters

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Robinson Terminal South Timeline

Waterfront Commission & Community Outreach*	Begin Spring 2014
Board of Architectural Review*	Begin April 2014
File DSUP Application	Fall 2014
Planning Commission Hearing	Winter 2015
City Council Hearing	Winter 2015
Demolition/Archeology/Flood Plain Process	Begin Spring 2015
Construction	Begin Spring 2016
First Occupancy	Summer 2017

*Ongoing process

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BAR DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Form
- Style
- Bay Width
- Height
- Building Width
- Siting
- Parking
- Fenestration
- Roof Form and Materials
- Building Spacing
- Architectural Detailing
- Materials
- Building Orientation
- Color

BAR PROCESS OUTLINE

Process Step	Purpose	Timing
BAR: Preliminary Submission and Work Session #1	Site history, overall planning concepts and design direction	Apr-14
P&Z: Stage 2 Concept Submission BAR: Work Session #2	Height, scale, mass, architectural language	June/July 2014
BAR: Refinements and Work Session #3	Review refinements to building architecture	Oct-14
BAR: Refinements and Work Session #4; Hearing re Permit to Demolish	Approval to raze existing warehouse buildings; review further refinements on MF / Mixed Use buildings	Dec-14
P&Z: DSUP Submission BAR: Work Session #5; 2nd Hearing re Permit to Demolish (if nec)	Final BAR advisory vote prior to PC and City Council votes	Jan-15
P&Z: DSUP Hearings (Planning Commission & City Council)	Development approval	Mar-15
BAR: Certificate of Appropriateness Process	Final detailed architectural approval	Spring-Summer 2015

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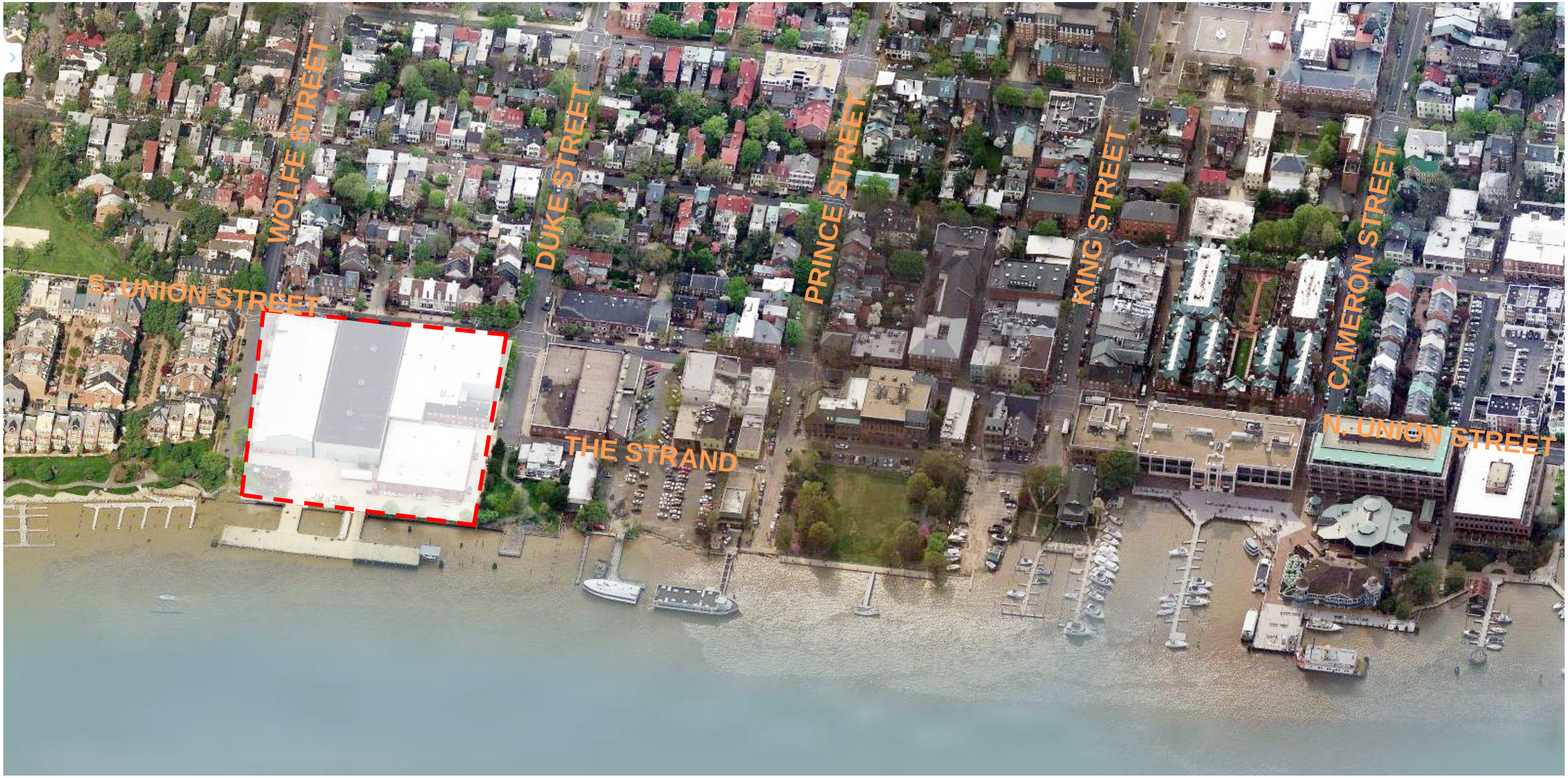
EXISTING AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



Union Street is the first north south link inland from the waterfront. From this perspective differences between the east and west sides of Union Street are apparent in terms of size, scale and texture of the urban fabric. From Wolfe Street at the south to Cameron Street at the north, the east side is predominantly commercial uses with larger building footprints and greater heights. The west side is both commercial and residential with residential concentrations to the south and north and more commercial uses near the center at King Street.

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SITE PLAN

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RENDERING

View from Wolfe Street looking east
BAR #3 Submission

View from Wolfe Street looking east
BAR #4 Submission

View from Wolfe Street looking east
BAR #4 Submission : Refinement

View from Wolfe Street looking east
BAR #5 Submission : Current Proposal

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Current Proposal

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Current Proposal

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Current Proposal

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BUILDING #3 ELEVATIONS

SOUTH ELEVATION

WEST ELEVATION

NORTH ELEVATION

EAST ELEVATION

CURRENT PROPOSAL

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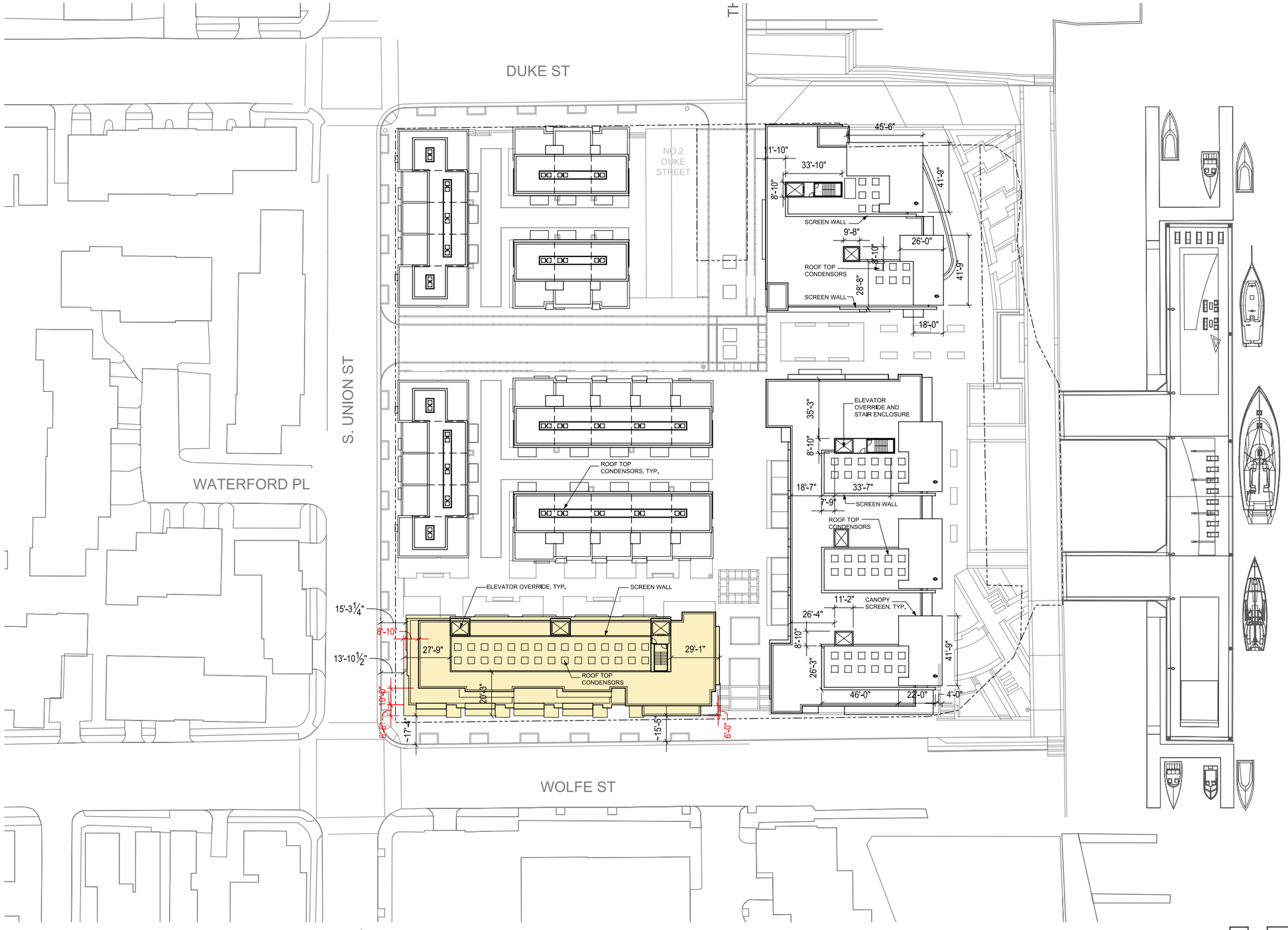
ROOF PLAN



ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH-ALEXANDRIA, VA | BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

0 30' SCALE: 1"= 60'-0"

THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF EYA life within walking distance
McGUIREWOODS 1750 TYSONS BOULEVARD, SUITE 1800 TYSONS CORNER, VA 22102 P: 703-712-5000
MPFP
MPFP LLC 41 East 11th Street New York, NY 10003 tele. 212. 477. 6066 fax. 212. 477. 6049
HISTORYmatters INTEGRATING THE HISTORY OF PEOPLE & PLACE
Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.

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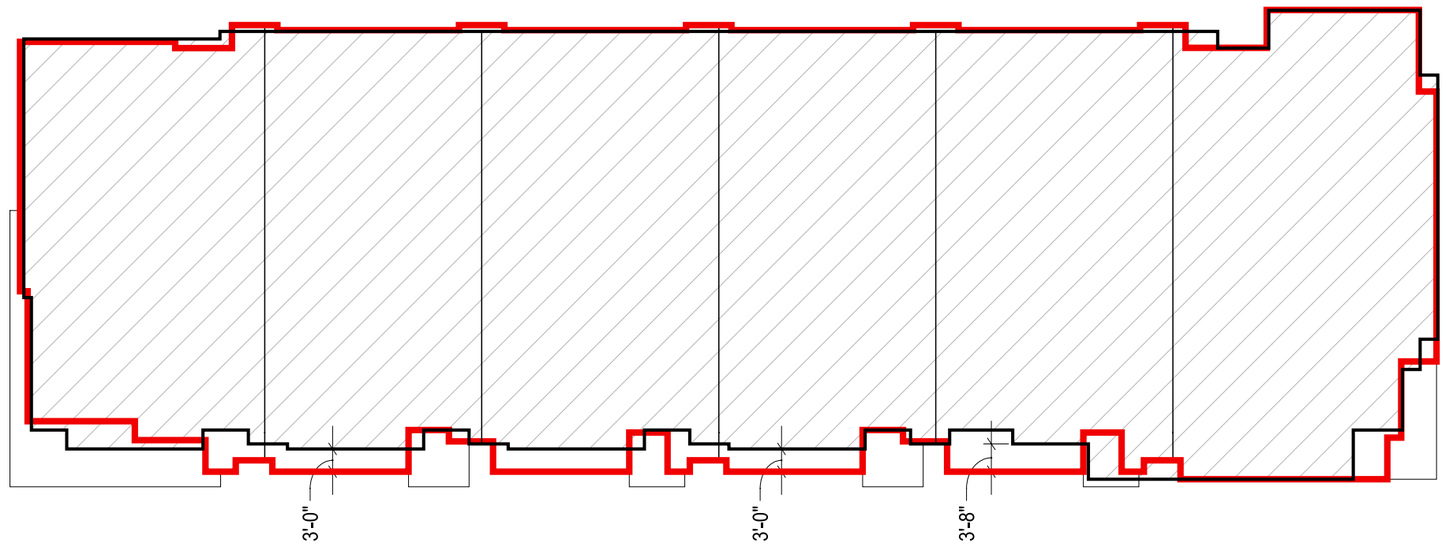
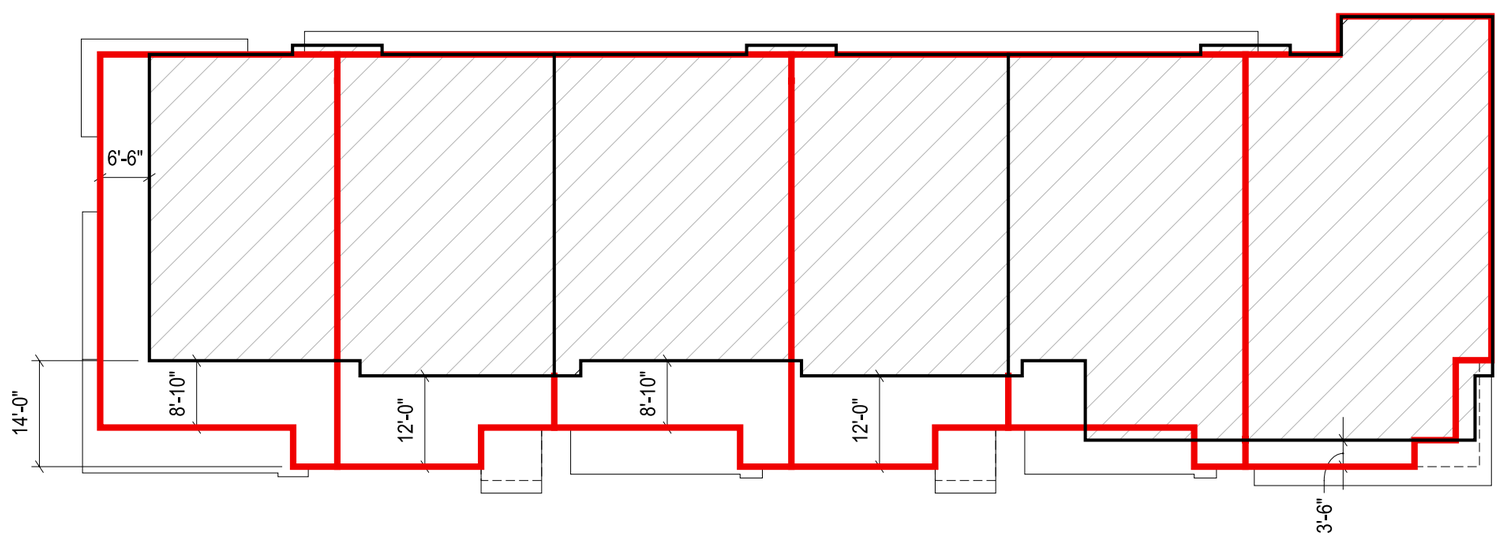
BUILDING 03 PLAN COMPARISON



BUILDING 03 - LEVEL 04



BUILDING 03 - LEVEL 05

B.A.R. #4 OUTLINE

B.A.R. #5 OUTLINE

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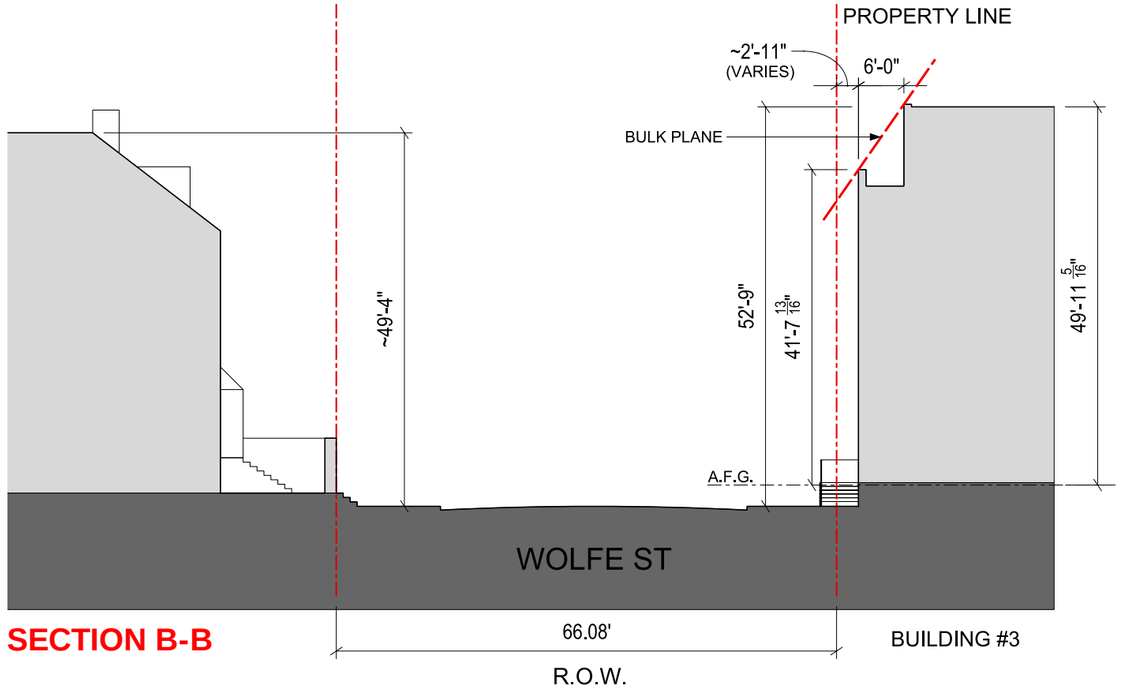
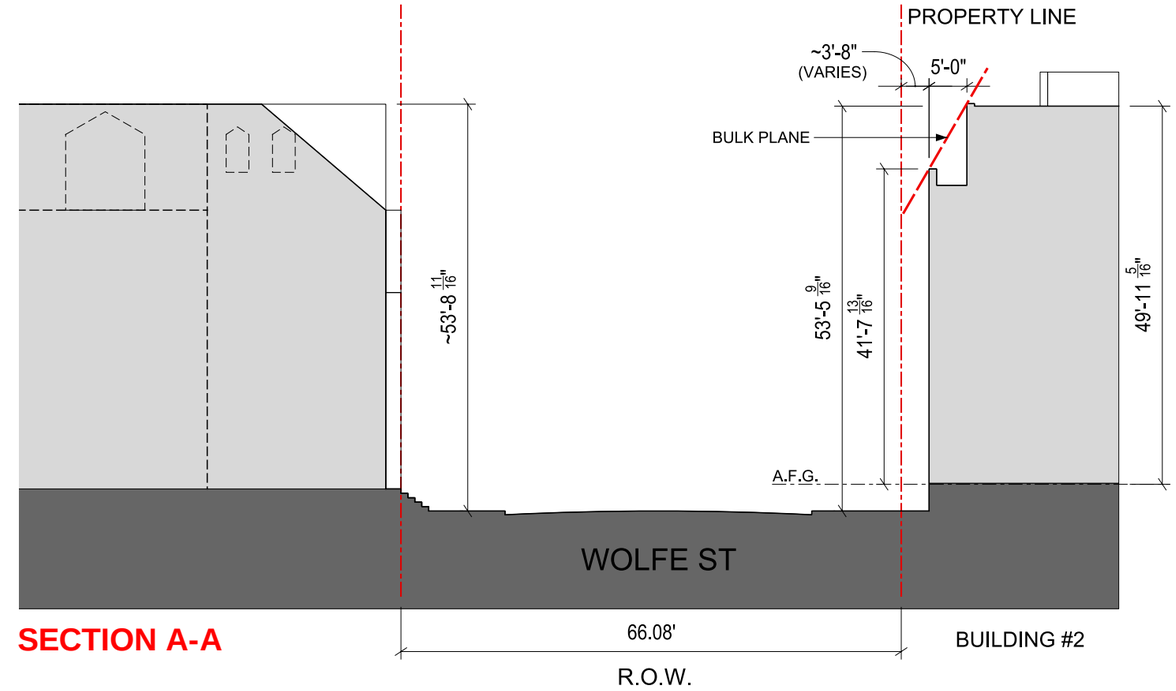
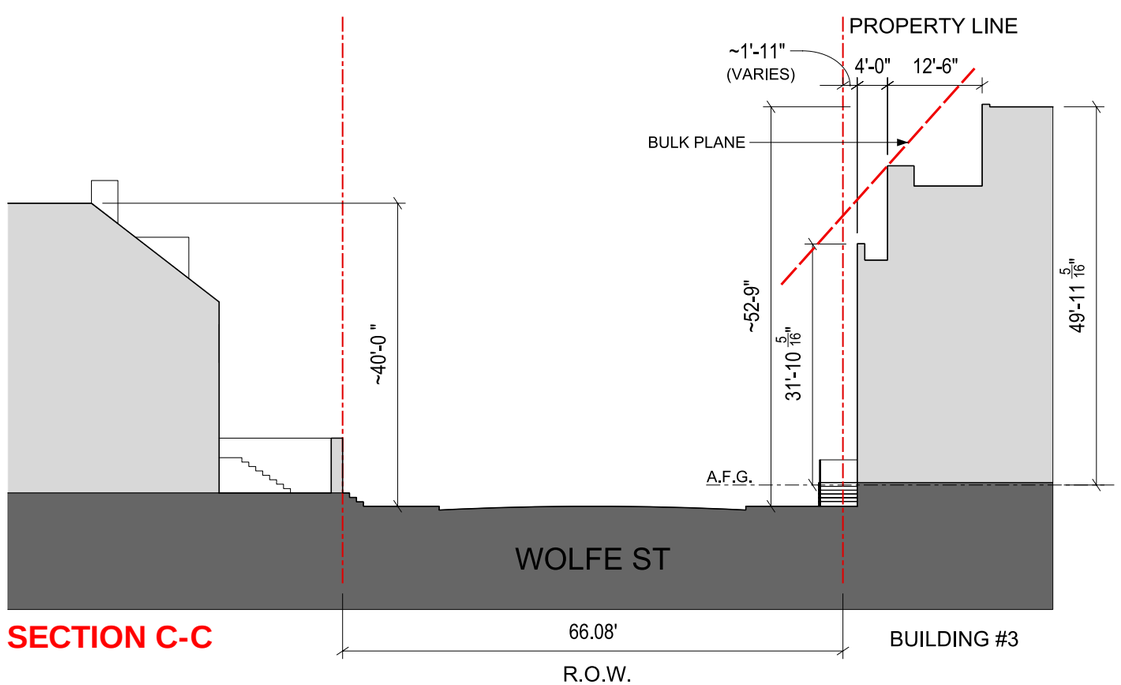


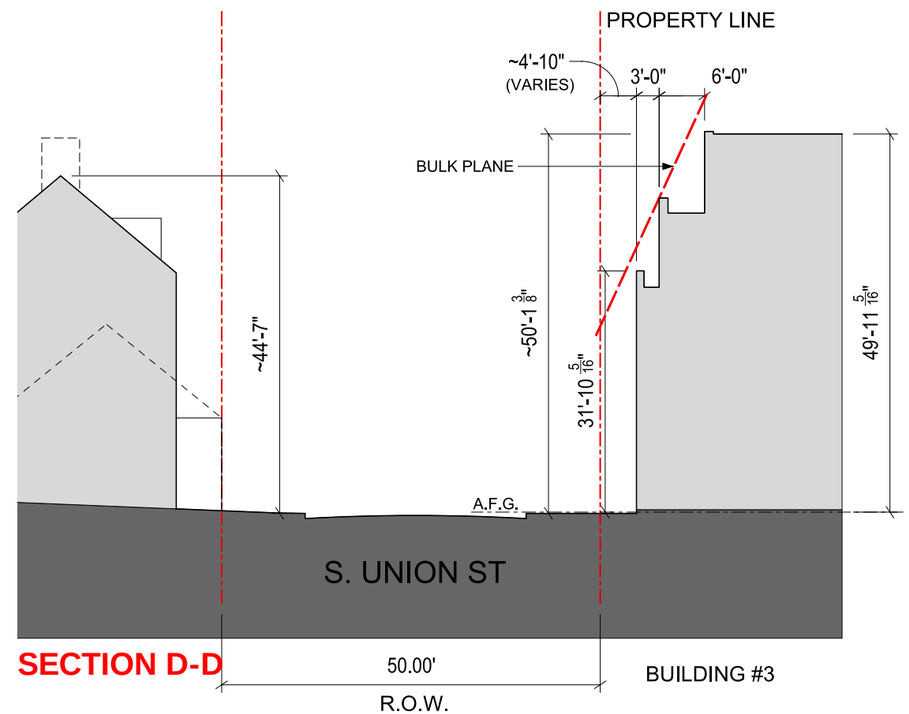
SECTION B-B



SECTION A-A

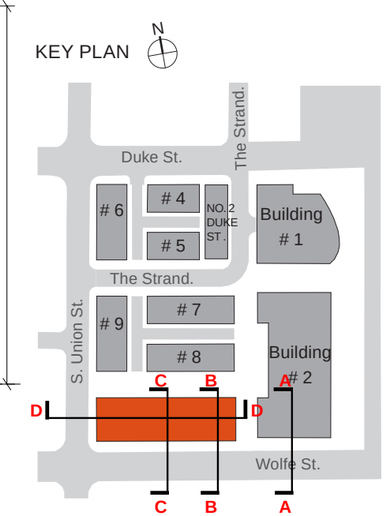


SECTION C-C



SECTION D-D

KEY PLAN



ROBINSON TERMINAL SOUTH-ALEXANDRIA, VA | BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

0 10' SCALE: 1"= 20'-0"

THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF EYA life within walking distance
McGUIREWOODS
MPFP
MPFP LLC
HISTORYmatters
Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.

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