

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

Alexandria Board of Architectural Review
Old & Historic Alexandria District

Wednesday, March 19, 2014

7:30pm, City Council Chambers, City Hall
301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Members Present: Tom Hulfish, Chairman
Oscar Fitzgerald, Vice-Chairman
John von Senden
Peter Smeallie
Chip Carlin
Wayne Neale
Christine Roberts

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager
Mary Catherine Collins, Historic Preservation Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m. by Chairman Hulfish.

I. MINUTES

Consideration of the minutes from the March 5, 2014 public hearing and the March 12, 2014 work session.

BOARD ACTION: Approved as submitted, 7-0.

On a motion by Mr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Smeallie, the minutes were approved, as submitted, 7-0.

II. CONSENT CALENDAR

No items were listed on the consent calendar.

III. NEW BUSINESS

1. CASE BAR2014-0026

Request to partially demolish and capsulate at **707 Devon Pl.**

APPLICANT: Mark Harold & Jocelyn Johnson Herrington by Keith F. Carroll

BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 7-0.

2. CASE BAR 2014-0027

Request for an addition and alterations at **707 Devon Pl.**

APPLICANT: Mark Harold & Jocelyn Johnson Herrington by Keith F. Carroll

BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 7-0.

SPEAKERS

Jocelyn Herrington and Keth Carrol presented the project. They confirmed that they agreed with staff’s recommendation.

Poul Hertel, 1217 Michigan Court, stated the fact that the property is not visible from the George Washington Memorial Parkway, does not exclude it from design review and that this should not be a precedent that would unravel the historic district.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Fitzgerald re-iterated that the condition of approval should include staff’s recommendation that the lattice be thick and not plastic. Mr. Smeallie concurred. On a motion by Ms. Roberts, seconded by Mr. Carlin, the applications were approved by a roll call vote, with conditions outlined by the staff recommendations.

REASON

The Board agreed with staff’s analysis, finding the porch addition to be appropriate and consistent with the Design Guidelines, minimally visible from a public way and compatible in scale and character with other homes in this neighborhood.

3. **CASE BAR 2014-0046**

Request for partial demolition of a shed at **615 S. Pitt St.**

APPLICANT: Robert Eelkema

BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 7-0.

4. **CASE BAR 2014-0047**

Request for alterations to rear fence at **615 S. Pitt St.**

APPLICANT: Robert Eelkema

BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 7-0.

SPEAKERS

The applicant presented the project and agreed with staff’s recommendations. On a motion by Mr. von Senden, seconded by Ms. Roberts, the applications were approved as amended, 7-0 by a roll call vote.

REASON

The Board agreed with the staff recommendation for approval, finding the demolition consistent with the criteria for a Permit to Demolish and the fence alterations in keeping with the Design Guidelines.

5. **CASE BAR2014-0049**

Request for alterations & signage at **700 King St.**

APPLICANT: Lululemon USA, Inc. by James Kratochvil

BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 7-0.

SPEAKERS

Andy Estabrooks, representing the applicant, presented the project. He stated that he has worked with staff and agreed with their recommendations.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Smeallie complimented the design, but inquired why the store name was not included on the signs. The applicant informed the Board that the brand logo has achieved sufficient recognition that a store name is not necessary.

Mr. Neale questioned the bright blue color for the windows and the black awnings. The applicant responded that the color was chosen by the store's manager as part of a comprehensive design for the space. Mr. Neale responded that he preferred a blue that was less bright and awnings in a charcoal gray color. He recommended that the applicant work with staff on the final color selection.

On a motion by Mr. Smeallie, seconded by Mr. von Senden, the application was approved, as amended.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. That the awnings be charcoal gray, with final approval by staff;
2. The windows be a darker blue, with final approval by staff;
3. All light fixtures and awnings be mounted through the mortar joints; and,
4. That the bottom of the blade sign is at least 8 feet above grade.

REASON

The Board found the proposed alterations compatible with the other buildings on King Street and Washington Street, with signage that meets the criteria outlined in the *Design Guidelines*, but that the proposed colors were too bold.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND ITEMS PREVIOUSLY DEFERRED

6. CASE BAR 2014-0036

Request for an addition & alterations at **5 Cameron St.**

APPLICANT: Blackwall Hitch Alexandria, LLC by Duncan W. Blair

BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 7-0.

SPEAKERS

The applicant spoke in support of the project, commenting on a connection between dark colors and Alexandria's waterfront history. He also stated that the Board members had the opportunity to view the material board on the site. The applicant concurred with staff's recommendations, as presented in the staff report.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Ms. Roberts stated that she preferred a multi-pane door and asked for clarification on the window color for the north and south wall elevations. The applicant clarified that the

existing panels are brushed aluminum, which might appear white in bright light, and were to remain. Mr. Blair, representing the applicant, interjected that the applicant would work with staff, after approval, to refine the color choice for the wall panels.

Mr. Neale stated that the design was highly integrated, with a well thought out color scheme. He felt the renderings did not reflect the colors accurately, in particular the nuances of the textures. He found that the proposed front addition functioned like a welcoming porch and supported the project overall.

Mr. Smeallie stated that he had the same initial response but now preferred a single light front door, in lieu of the multi-light option, as that could be too busy in context with everything else going on at the entry.

Mr. Carlin commended the applicant on exemplary design that has easy public access and contributes to the new City waterfront area.

Mr. von Senden said that he opposed the dark color, but not enough to vote against the application. He too commended the applicant on a well thought-out design.

Mr. Fitzgerald seconded Mr .von Senden’s comments.

Mr. Neale made a motion to approve the application, as amended, seconded by Mr. Carlin.

REASON

The Board found the proposed alterations generally in compliance with the *Design Guidelines* and a welcome rehabilitation of a currently vacant building.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. That the illustrated design for the trellis and fabric canopy is approved in concept, requiring the final cross sections and details to be approved by Staff prior to building permit.
2. That the applicant will provide specifications, if applicable, for any additional exterior doors to be replaced on the building for final staff level approval.
3. That the location of the proposed lighting is approved based on the Lighting Plan with the final design of the fixtures and intensity of illumination to be determined in the field by Staff.

7. CASE BAR 2013-03231

Request for complete demolition at **220 S Union St.**

APPLICANT: Carr Hospitality by Rust Orling Architecture

BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 3-2.

8. CASE BAR 2013-0321

Request for new construction at **220 S Union St.**

APPLICANT: Carr Hospitality by Rust Orling Architecture
BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 3-2.

Mr. Neale recused himself from this case and left the dais.

The Chair mentioned the work session that had been held on March 12, 2014 where no formal action was taken but there was some general consensus on many of the design items, except the brick color.

Mr. Orling, the architect, presented an alternate to the previous uniform dark red brick color on South Union Street. He explained that many of the Board members that visited his office to see the samples in the daylight had preferred a range of red with a lighter colored mortar.

Mr. Fitzgerald was concerned that the brick was still too dark.

Mr. Carlin explained that the samples shown tonight were the darker examples of the range and that the full range had a lot more of the lighter and medium values. He made a motion to approve the project with staff recommendations and the alternate brick sample panel presented at the hearing with signs and a few other items to be reviewed at a later date.

Mr. Smeallie asked whether the motion was for approval of the entire design. Mr. Carlin clarified that this was his intent, per the recommendations in the staff report.

Mr. von Senden seconded the motion.

The Chair then opened the floor to the public.

SPEAKERS

Bert Ely, 200 S. Pitt St., representing the Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront, spoke against the project.

Patricia Washington, 625 N Washington Street, representing the Alexandria Convention & Visitors Association, spoke in strong support of the project.

Lisa Schumaier, 2403 Leslie Avenue, spoke in support of the project, saying that she was excited that there would be something new to do on the waterfront, with excellent views of the river from the restaurant.

Katherine Papp, 504 Cameron St., opposed several elements of the project including the mansard roof, the red brick color choice, the windows on the second and third stories, the parking garage exhaust venting into the interior court, and the proposed lighting. Finally, she stated that this proposal was much too large to be called a boutique hotel.

Val Hawkins, 418 Duke Street, representing the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, reminded the Board that this is the sixth time they have reviewed the project and requested that the Board approve the application.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Chairman stated that he and his family have been very involved in Alexandria since the 1800's and the waterfront is a very important space. He stated his sentiment that the hotel is not a boutique hotel and is inappropriate for the location, though he admitted the design had gotten better and better through a great deal of work. For those reasons, he abstained from voting, delegating the responsibilities of Chairman to Vice-chair Fitzgerald.

Mr. Fitzgerald lauded the improvements he has seen in the design through a long and difficult process and we now have something we can really be proud of.

Mr. Smeallie stated that the project was much too large for the site, though he was not bothered by the height, he felt that the design resembled an inflated warehouse with too much mass. He said that, even as large as it is, he was pleased that the design kept getting better and better with each review and that it was now a good design but that he could not support the application based on the size of the building on this site.

Ms. Roberts stated that she had reviewed the brick samples and the design in the architect's office that day and was pleased with the design when she left. She said the building was a great job for what it was but, after visiting the site again prior to the meeting, felt that it was still too tall and overwhelming for the site and that she would not support the project.

On a motion made by Mr. Carlin and seconded by Mr. von Senden, the applications were approved, as amended, 3-2-1 by roll-call vote. Chairman Hulfish abstained.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. That the South Union Street building use the alternate red brick sample panel and lighter colored mortar presented at the hearing.
2. That the applicant return to the BAR for approval of all decorative, building-mounted light fixtures and any architectural lighting on The Strand elevation, following coordination with the adjacent park lighting plan.
3. That all proposed exterior materials, including windows and doors, be in conformance with the Board's adopted policies and specifications with final approval by staff during building permit review.
4. That all building signs be reviewed by the Board separately at a later date.

REASON

The Board found that the applicant had addressed the concerns expressed during the recent work session, and that the proposed hotel now met the criteria outlined in the BAR's *Design Guidelines* for new construction on the waterfront. The Board agreed

with staff's recommendations to approve the demolition of the existing structure and to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with conditions listed above.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

11. **BAR2014-00038**

An informal work session with public testimony regarding the proposed development at **513-515 N Washington St.**

SPEAKERS

Robin Bettarel, representing the property owner CAS Riegler Companies, introduced the project.

David Kitchens of Cooper Carry Architects at 625 N Washington Street, presented the proposed addition and alterations, emphasizing that the building has been altered over time to accommodate changing uses.

Robin Bettarel added that the landscaping plan for the property will balance public and private areas.

Poul Hertel, 1217 Michigan Court, spoke in opposition, commenting that the proposed addition does not comply with the Washington Street Standards. He preferred a design that was one story shorter, without a rooftop monitor, and redesigned. He provided a printed copy of his comments to the Board.

Fred Lowe, 609 Oronoco Street, stated that the applicant has been professional and mostly addressed his concerns, however he expressed concerns over any painted wall signs on the south or east elevations, that the overhanging decks on the addition and top roof deck on the historic structure would impact the privacy of the adjacent properties, and that the proposed public space could be a gathering place for "undesirable" people.

Mark Lucas, 562 N. Saint Asaph Street, said that he was conflicted about the new structure because, while he was excited to see the historic property revitalized and believed that the addition would help shield Shad Row from the traffic of N. Washington Street, at the same time he felt that the protruding balconies and roof decks may negatively impact Shad Row. He also felt that, perhaps, the scale of the building was not suited to this site and that the size of the new structure would loom over the street and adjacent properties. He stated that the development team had been very professional in their dealings with the neighbors.

Yohannes Makonnen, 574 N. Saint Asaph Street, found the annex design too stark and modern, preferring a brick or Colonial feel. He expressed concern over the loss of two parking spaces in the northeast corner, and requested that the existing tree in the northeast corner remain. Appreciated the communication from the CAS Reigler team.

Dan Straub, representing the Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee, said that he looks forward to the Board doing a careful review of the project.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Carlin said that a scaled elevation from Pendleton and N. Washington streets and a proper site plan with spot grades is required for the Board to complete an adequate analysis of the location, scale, and massing. He did not support the design of the annex and recommended a two week deferral for additional information.

Mr. von Senden called to question the period of significance for the restoration. He agreed with the opinion of the National Park Service that the period of significance should be when the building was first converted to apartments in the 1930's. If this is the period of significance, then the shutters should remain. However, if the 19th century factory is the most significant, then the shutters should be removed. He felt that any extant roof beams in the attic should be retained, where feasible, and believed that the east elevation alterations were sympathetic, including the roofline.

For the new addition, he suggested that the applicant may find that the garage door will need to be larger for practical reasons. He did not support whitewashing the masonry or the roof element of the proposed annex, as the architectural character did not comply with the Washington Street Standards. He stated a preference for the larger square windows, but felt that the entire design needed to be refined to reflect the Washington Street Standards. Lastly, Mr. von Senden stated that he liked the park and the fact that it hid the parking lot from Washington Street. He thought that the berm would help keep the public space semi-private.

Mr. Fitzgerald found the effect of the model renderings inappropriate for accurately representing the project but stated that the scale appeared to be appropriate for the block. He appreciated the factory character and liked that the annex related to the specific historic building at 515 N Washington Street and not all of the buildings on Washington Street. He said that the annex needed to look more factory-like and the penthouse should be re-designed. He found the ironwork connecting the two buildings to be too heavy and overwhelming. Supporting the factory-like design of the buildings, he preferred removal of the shutters but said the front portico should remain. The painted wall signs he found appropriate. However, he felt the additional entrances proposed on N. Washington Street would destroy the façade and the design concept. He suggested a brick wall to replace the open fence proposed for the south and north boundaries. In conclusion, Mr. Fitzgerald said the building should look more like a factory and less like Mount Vernon.

Mr. Smeallie found the massing and location for the annex suitable, but expressed concern over the rooftop element. He stated that the Washington Street Standards are not mandates because they do not have objective measurability. He told the applicant that flexibility is built in to the Standards and one cannot do something from a prescribed palette in this location. He said that this project was a great opportunity to have a complimentary addition that contrasts and does not replicate the historic and iconic structure. He would not support a vague imitation. He also felt that this annex was too

visible and large to be a background building; therefore its design should not be merely that of a background building. He agreed with the National Park Service that the Colonial Revival alterations have achieved historic importance and that the shutters should stay.

Ms. Roberts reminded the applicant that the east and west rooflines were very visible across town, due to the scale of the building and the topography. Therefore, she preferred a consistent dormer roofline on the two sides. She stated that she was not attached to the shutters and agreed with Mr. Carlin's assessment of the annex, saying that more drawings showing the elevations and slope of Pendleton Street were needed.

Mr. Neale thanked staff for their analysis in the report and told the applicant that the preliminary presentation was good, but that the design did not go far enough. He found the proposed location for the annex to be the most suitable on the site, and appreciated the green space that would be made available on N. Washington Street. He found the material and detail of the hyphen between the historic building and proposed annex to have too much contrast and too heavy in detailing. He found the contrast too sharp between the annex and the historic building -- and the historic district in general. He suggested that instead of a block monolith, the annex should resemble two buildings put together with a random or rambling effect, similar to the historic additions that were once present on the site. He suggested that the applicant look for a geometry or abstract quality to extract from the historic building as the foundation for the design of the annex. He further recommended that the applicant explore a sloped roof with a pedestrian level water table course for the annex, reminding the applicant that just because similar penthouses were recently approved at the former Health Department building, did not necessarily mean they are appropriate here. He felt that the revised design should minimize the garage door opening, rather than glorify it.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hulfish adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:05 pm.

Minutes submitted by,

Mary Catherine Collins, Preservation Planner
Board of Architectural Review