

Special Use Permit #2023-00076
404-A E. Alexandria Ave – Substandard Lot without Street Frontage Development

Application	General Data	
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for Special Use Permits for the development of a vacant substandard lot with a single-family dwelling, a lot without frontage on a public street, and a parking reduction.	Planning Commission Hearing:	January 4, 2024
	City Council Hearing:	January 20, 2024
	City Council Hearing:	February 24, 2024
	City Council Hearing:	March 12, 2024
Address: 404-A E. Alexandria Avenue	Zone:	R 2-5/ Residential Single Family and Two Family
Applicant: Eric Teran and Daniela Gross	Small Area Plan:	Potomac West Small Area Plan

Staff Recommendation: APPROVAL subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and the recommended permit conditions found in Section III of this report.

Staff Reviewers: Rachel Drescher, rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov
 Sam Shelby, sam.shelby@alexandriava.gov

CITY COUNCIL ACTION, FEBRUARY 24, 2024: On a motion by Councilmember Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Bagley, the City Council voted to defer SUP #2023-00076 to the March 12, 2024 City Council Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

CITY COUNCIL ACTION, JANUARY 20, 2024: On a motion by Councilmember Gaskins, seconded by Councilmember McPike, the City Council voted to defer SUP #2023-00076 to the February 24, 2024 City Council Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Reason: At the hearing, staff was notified by the applicant that a previous version of the applicants' plans had been provided to City Council. Given this, staff recommended deferral. City Council agreed with staff's recommendation.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JANUARY 4, 2024: On a motion by Commissioner Koenig, seconded by Vice Chair McMahan, the Planning Commission voted to recommend

approval of SUP #2023-00076. The motion carried on a vote of 4 to 3, with Commissioners Brown, Lyle, and Ramirez voting against.

Reason: The Planning Commission generally agreed with staff analysis.

Discussion:

Commissioner Lyle asked which City department is responsible for enforcing short term rental regulations. Staff replied that Planning and Zoning inspectors enforce the regulations but that there are some enforcement challenges, particularly with the limitations imposed on accessory dwelling units. Short term rentals must be registered with the City's Finance Department. Staff also mentioned that private companies monitor short term rental metrics including advertising.

Commissioner Lyle observed that it would not be feasible to store construction vehicles or equipment on the subject property due to its size and proposed configuration. She asked staff where these activities would occur. Staff explained that the applicant would be required to comply with all applicable City regulations and these matters would be reviewed during the grading plan and building permit processes.

Commissioner Manor asked whether Airbnb requires compliance with City required transient lodging tax and whether enforcement of short term rental limits could be tracked through tax receipts. Staff said tax is collected, however, tax revenue is subject to confidentiality laws that may restrict using that information for enforcement.

Commissioner Brown asked where the heating facilities would be located and whether the accessory dwelling unit (ADU) and main house would have separate facilities. Mr. Teran, the applicant, explained the main house would have mini splits in the wall and the condenser units would be placed on the west side of the house. The ADU's heating facility would be located either in the same location or between the main house and ADU. They would be separate.

Commissioner Koenig asked about how cars would maneuver in and out of the subject property. Mr. Teran explained that getting in and out of the driveway would be feasible but somewhat difficult due to the configuration of the alleys. Commissioner Koenig also asked about the use of the property regarding short term rentals. Mr. Teran said he intends to rent the property to long term tenants.

Commissioner Manor asked what size ADU would be allowed on the property. Staff explained he could build up to 500 square feet and up to the same height of the dwelling, however this size could likely not be accommodated on the lot.

Chair Macek asked how ADU policies apply now that Zoning for Housing would allow for multiple units. Staff explained that the ADU regulations have not changed, and while there are more restrictions for ADUs, they still offer setback and FAR incentives that are not provided to multi-unit dwellings.

Vice Chair McMahon observed that many concerns about the proposal were related to the small size of the subject property and that it appears to be twice the size of the lots to the south. She asked staff for a rough estimate of lot size in Del Ray. Staff replied that the average lot size is 2,500 square feet and that most single unit dwellings in the neighborhood are built across two lots. Vice Chair McMahon stated that part of the paved alley is on the subject property which could change how the alley is used.

Vice Chair McMahon asked staff to confirm that the alleys from East Alexandria Avenue and Mount Vernon Avenue are public. Staff explained they are platted as public and the 10-foot access from Mount Vernon Avenue is suitable and the same width as East Abingdon Drive around George Washington Parkway. There are alleys that are narrower in Old Town, and there are other laneway homes throughout Alexandria. This type of development is not atypical, not just here, but all over the world because it is a way to have incrementally smaller housing units. Staff also stated that they asked the applicant to provide turning movements to demonstrate that a vehicle could access the site, and that applicant is providing additional pervious paver area for maneuverability. Staff proposed conditions requiring both bollards to be placed to protect the existing utility equipment and for the alleys to be repaved.

Vice Chair McMahon asked staff whether the tree preservation plan the applicant proposed reflects a typical procedure. Staff explained that an applicant must show the root zones that extend into a subject property from neighboring properties. This situation is unique because one of the trees is located on City-owned right-of-way (ROW) so staff can negotiate directly with the applicant as to how the tree would be protected. If any construction or activity is within the root zone of trees on neighboring properties, the landscape guidelines require the applicant to notify the neighbors. In this case, the applicant provided that the root zones would not be affected by the proposal. If any root zones were affected, this would not necessarily preclude construction.

Commissioner Ramirez asked who owns the lot to the east. Staff explained that the City owns the ROW to the east. She asked if this would be used for fire access. Staff explained that fire codes require a house entrance to be located within 100 feet of a street but in a real emergency, the Fire Department may use the public ROW to access the property. Staff explained that the applicant would be required to seek code modifications that may necessitate changes to building construction to comply with fire code. These changes could include a fire sprinkler system and fire rated walls.

Commissioner Koenig stated that he respects the observations and concerns of the neighbors who spoke in opposition but that they did not convince him to recommend denial of the proposal. He noted that almost all the surrounding lots are residential and that they have a wide variety of lot sizes. Commissioner Koenig also noted the wide range of house sizes surrounding the subject property. He found that the size and shape of the lot and proposed dwelling to be in line with the character of the neighborhood. He stated the design is modest in scale and simple in form which is the same many of the dwellings that surround the subject property. Commissioner Koenig explained that Del Ray contains diverse architecture. He found that the proposal was carefully crafted to fit well into the small site. Commissioner Koenig reiterated that the lot is not legally unbuildable and posited that a reason it had not been previously developed could be

that no developer had found a solution that worked on the site. He stated that the SUP process exists to deal with unique sites. Commissioner Koenig stated the applicant has provided a design to construct a dwelling and ADU without requiring any relief from setbacks or FAR, which, given the lot size and dimensions, ensure a modestly sized house. Commissioner Koenig also observed that there the City has no restrictions on short term rentals of primary dwellings.

Commissioner Brown stated that he respected the Commissioner Koenig's position but that he disagreed. He stated that development of substandard lots used to be prohibited but regulations were created to allow development with SUP approval. To be considered for SUP approval, Commissioner Brown emphasized that the proposal must be compatible with the neighborhood. He stated that compatibility includes bulk, height, and design considerations but that it is also a subjective judgment call. Commissioner Brown stated developers should work out the compatibility issues, such as changing or scaling back the design, with the neighbors before coming to public hearing, and did not feel this developer worked with the neighbors enough prior to the hearing. Commissioner Brown stated he could not support the request.

Commissioner Lyle stated she agreed with Commissioner Brown. She recommended that the applicant defer and work with the neighbors to make changes that would be supported. She found the proposal would not be compatible with the neighborhood. Commissioner Lyle recalled that previous SUPs for substandard lots had been deferred and returned to Planning Commission with a project she felt comfortable supporting. Commissioner Lyle stated she does not believe that the lot is unbuildable but that the proposal did not meet the required SUP criteria for approval.

Commissioner Manor stated he would support a deferral.

Vice Chair McMahon outlined the issues raised: landscaping, stormwater, emergency access, utility lines, and short term rental. She found that the staff had worked with the applicant to address concerns that could be appropriately addressed through the SUP process and that the balance of the concerns would be worked out through the grading plan and building permit processes. Vice Chair McMahon shared Commissioner Koenig's observations that the project would meet all the setback requirements, and while it does not meet the lot size requirements, however, as shown on the map, lots and houses of this size or smaller already exist on this block. Vice Chair McMahon stated she is sympathetic to Commissioners Lyle and Brown's concerns that a neighborhood consensus had not been established but that the proposed dwelling would not be imposing as it has a diminutive height and a significant portion of its living space would be located below grade. Vice Chair McMahon stated that she appreciates seeing a dialogue between the applicant and neighbors, but that she found the SUP criteria to be met and was supportive of the request.

Chair Macek stated he would not support a deferral. He explained that there is no requirement for an applicant to meet with or get consensus from surrounding neighbors. He found the proposal would meet all SUP criteria. Chair Macek highlighted that the subject property is twice the size of two directly adjacent lots that are in the same zone and reiterated that the lot is not legally unbuildable. He observed that many of the surrounding lots are substandard, as are half the lots in Del Ray. Chair Macek stated that while the lot does not have street frontage, this is

not the fault of the applicant. This is an existing lot, and the applicant is trying to make productive use of it. He found the proposal to reflect similar carriage lots in other parts of the City. Chair Macek said he had not heard from other Commissioners what changes would need to be made to make a deferral effective. He agreed that staff should encourage applicants to meet with the neighbors, but he did not hear from the neighbors what changes could be made to change their positions.

Commissioner Brown restated that the proposal must be compatible, and that compatibility is partially a judgement call. Commissioner Brown proposed an alternative development of the subject property: it could be put up for sale and purchased by one of the property owners along East Alexandria Avenue. Then, that property owner could seek to vacate the public alley between the subject property and theirs. That property owner could then construct an ADU on the subject property.

Commissioner Koenig responded to Commissioner Brown's observations regarding scaling back the house and matching the design to other dwellings on the block. Commissioner Koenig stated scaling back the house would not be reasonable given its already modest size and height. In terms of making the house look like the others on the block, this is not plausible as there are fundamentally different architectural styles. Commissioner Koenig stated that, given what he heard from speakers, a consensus on the proposal may not be possible. This difference of opinion did not necessitate a deferral to Commissioner Koenig. He stated the applicant submitted a detailed application that responded to the majority of the neighbors' concerns. The applicant made a distinctive change to the architecture and reduced the square footage in order to respond to concerns to save the tree. Commissioner Koenig stated that he did not believe further conversation with the neighbors would be productive.

Speakers:

Brett Rice, 408 East Alexandria Avenue, spoke in opposition to the request. He stated that the SUP process should be a collaboration between the applicant, staff, and neighbors, and that did not occur. He expressed concern about developing a lot that was only 2,662 square feet, about the property being used as a short-term rental, and that the applicant could request up to four units on the property under the new Zoning for Housing provisions. He stated the proposal was not compatible as there are no other contemporary dwellings on the street nor are there any other lots without street frontage in Del Ray. He also had stormwater and flooding concerns.

Commissioner Macek asked Mr. Rice if there were any alternatives to the proposal that he would be supportive of. Mr. Rice replied that it is not a developable lot and that no development would be acceptable.

Matt Kaim, 1413 Mount Vernon Avenue, spoke in opposition to the request. He stated the size of the subject property is nearly 50 percent smaller than the 5,000 square foot lot size requirement and that its lot width is less than the required 50 foot lot width. He had concerns about emergency access, stormwater and flooding, tree preservation, limited on-street parking on Mount Vernon and East Alexandria Avenues, alley vision clearance, and lack of staff outreach. He also had concerns that construction vehicles would use his driveway to maneuver and would cause damage to his property.

Alicia Montgomery, 406 East Alexandria Avenue, spoke in opposition to the request. She agreed with the Del Ray Land Use Committee's recommendation of denial. She stated there was minimal public engagement and did not hear from staff when she emailed, and that staff's recommendation did not align with the opinion of local residents. She said the proposal is not in character with the neighborhood because there are no other Del Ray lots that lack street frontage and that approving this project would set a precedent that would drastically change the neighborhood character, increase density, and negatively impact on-street parking. She also expressed concern about vehicular access including access for emergency vehicles.

John Burdick, 1409 Mount Vernon Avenue, spoke in opposition to the request. He had concerns about stormwater and flooding, that the proposed dwelling would be constructed too close to his property, how this would impact the appeal of his property to future renters or buyers, and that the lack of frontage would challenge delivery service providers.

Angela Rice, 408 East Alexandria Avenue, spoke in opposition to the request. She stated the reason the lot had not been developed is because the lot is too small and does not have street frontage. She had concerns about tree preservation, and the contemporary design. She also stated that children play in the alleys surrounding the subject property and expressed concerns about their safety. She was also concerned about how construction materials would be delivered and stockpiled on the subject property.

Patrick Welsh, 413 East Alexandria Avenue, spoke in opposition of the request. He had concerns with the location of house.

Mary Ellen File, 1401 Mount Vernon Avenue, spoke in opposition of the request.

Eric Teran, applicant, spoke in support of the request. Mr. Teran stated he reached out to neighbors and held a meeting at the subject property in early November to share his proposal. He also attended the Del Ray Land Use Committee meeting and said that he had worked to address their concerns. After receiving staff feedback regarding the surrounding trees, he hired an arborist and redesigned the house as to not be located within structural root zones. He also stated that this would not set a precedent since there are very few lots without street frontage in Alexandria and only two vacant lots left in Del Ray. In terms of lot size, the 2,662 square foot lot is on the smaller side, however, there are a mix of lots sizes in this area with square footage between 1,200 and 5,000 and above. Regarding design, he explained there is a wide range of architectural styles in this neighborhood. While the proposal is contemporary, he said he drew from other styles in the neighborhood. In regard to parking, originally there were two spaces on the plans. After receiving feedback from staff regarding maneuverability, this was adjusted to one space. Regarding street frontage, the final design he proposed would be significantly smaller and shorter than many of the surrounding houses. Mr. Teran also conducted a shadow study to demonstrate that the proposal would not impede light and air supply to surrounding properties. He further explained that the lot was created in 1938 and it had never been considered a non-buildable lot. He explained many of the neighbors' concerns regarding construction would be addressed during the building permit process. Regarding stormwater concerns, he explained he would be required to retain stormwater, and that any excess runoff would go drain directly to the City's stormwater collection system. He also mentioned the proposal's green roof and softscape

elements which reduce the impact of impervious surfaces. Mr. Teran also mentioned that he spoke with Fire Department staff and confirmed he would comply with any modifications required to comply with fire code requirements.

I. DISCUSSION

The applicants, Eric Teran and Daniela Gross, request Special Use Permit (SUP) approval to develop a single-family dwelling on a vacant, substandard lot without street frontage at 404-A East Alexandria Avenue. The existing lot is substandard as it does not meet the R-2-5 zone's minimum lot area and lot width requirements. The applicants also request SUP approval for a parking reduction.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Zoning Ordinance classifies the subject property at 404-A East Alexandria Avenue as a vacant, substandard lot of record without street frontage. The lot has a rectangular shape and measures approximately 59 feet (along its east and west lot lines) by 45 feet (along its north and south lot lines). It has a lot size of 2,662 square feet. 10-foot-wide alleys run along the north, west and south lot lines of the subject property. A portion of unimproved City right-of-way (ROW) abuts the subject property to the east. Single-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings coexist within the same block. Figure one, below, shows the subject property.



Figure 1 - Subject Property (vacant lot)

BACKGROUND

The subject property was created by a re-subdivision of a portion of Block 10 of the "Park Addition to Alexandria" subdivision in 1938. Aerial imagery dating back to 1937 shows that the subject property has been continuously vacant since its creation. In 2013, vacation request (VAC #2013-00001) was submitted to vacate a portion of the right-of-way adjacent to the subject property. It was subsequently withdrawn.

PROPOSAL

The applicants request SUP approvals to develop the subject property with a two-story dwelling. The proposed dwelling would have 1,082.50 square feet of net floor area and would measure 19.83 feet in height from average pre-construction grade to the midpoint of the dwelling's gable roof.

The applicants' proposed design exhibits a contemporary architectural style, which exhibits clean lines, minimal ornament, and a traditional form. Figures two through five, below, show the proposed elevations.

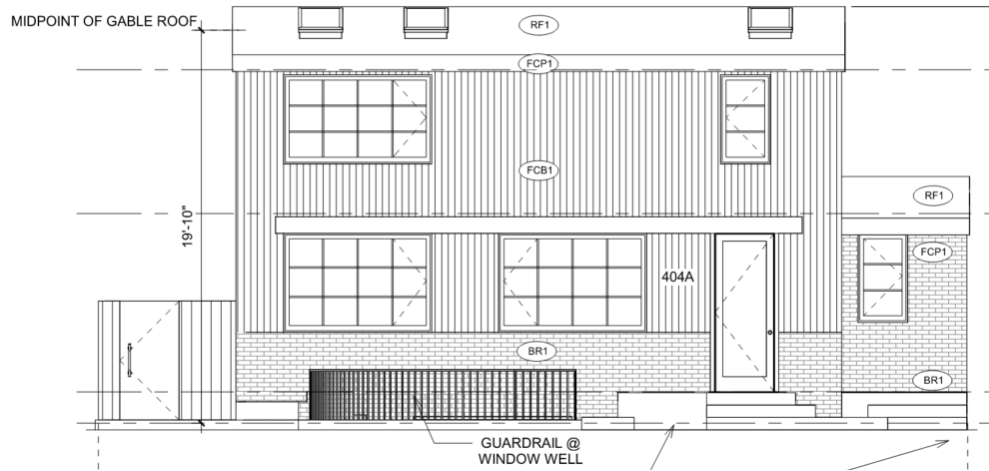


Figure 2 - Proposed North Elevation (Front)

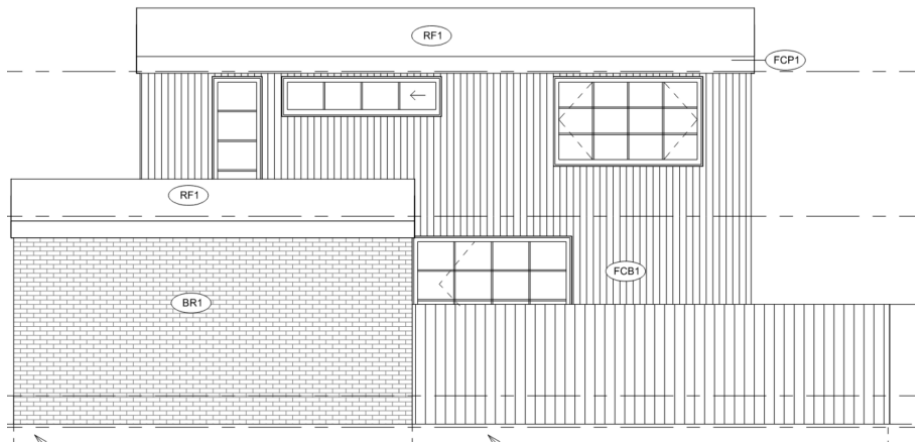


Figure 3 – Proposed North Elevation (Rear)

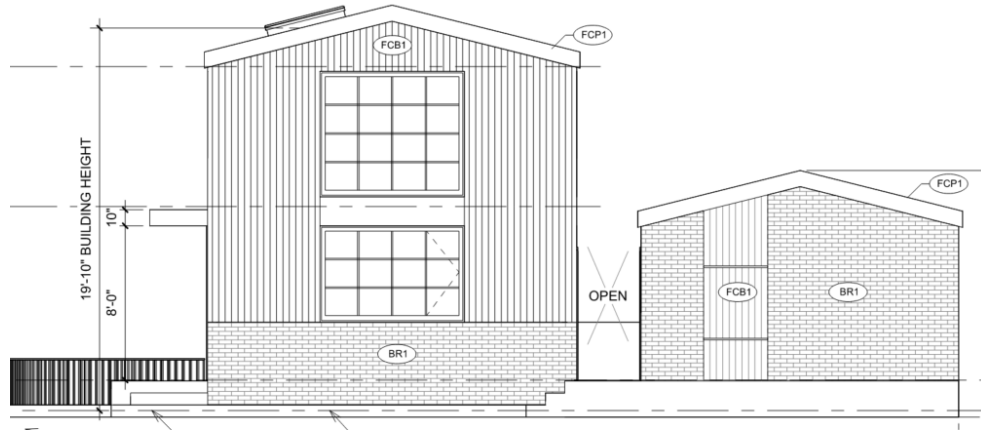


Figure 4 - Proposed West Elevation (Side)

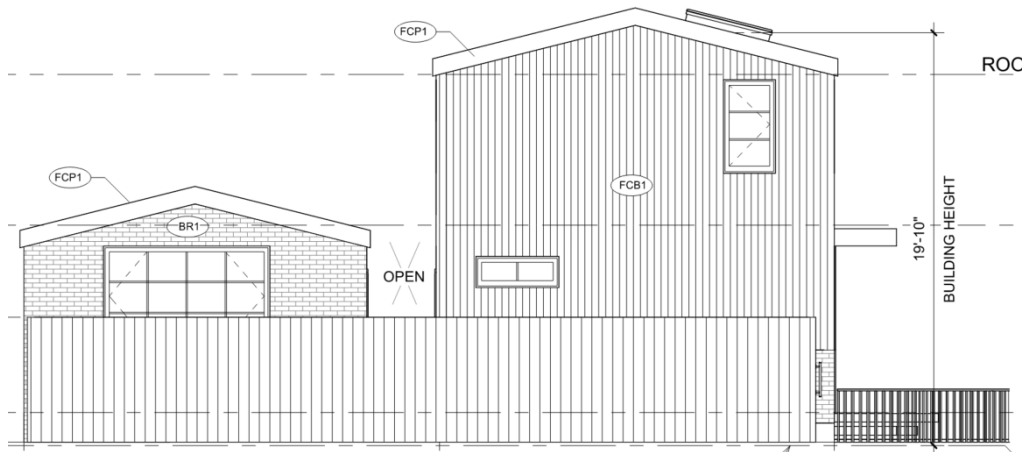


Figure 5 - Proposed East Elevation (Side)

The dwelling would measure approximately 30.67 feet by 19 feet with a footprint of about 661.29 square feet, including the front porch. It would provide a front yard of 20 feet; a west side yard of 7.0 feet; an east side yard of 7.0 feet; and a 19.83-foot rear yard. Figure 6, below, shows the proposed site plan.

The site currently contains no trees nor landscaping. The applicants propose a Black Gum tree in the front yard of the property upon redevelopment to satisfy the City's required 25 percent tree canopy coverage.

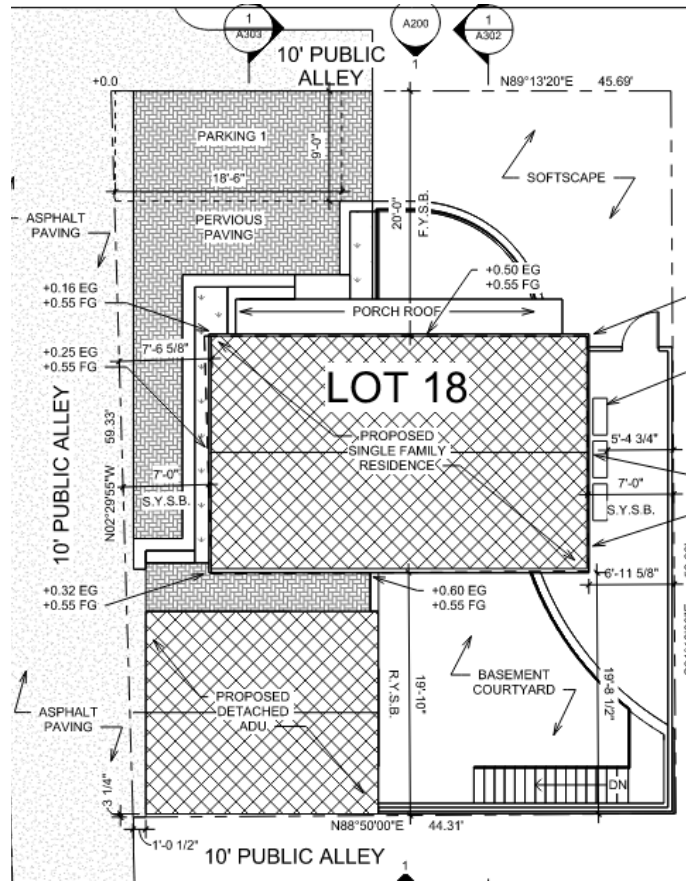


Figure 6 - Proposed Site Plan

PARKING

Zoning Ordinance section 8-200(A)(1) requires two off-street parking spaces for a single-family dwelling. The applicants would use the alley off Mount Vernon Avenue to access the property. The applicants are requesting a one space reduction to the two-space requirement.

ZONING

The subject property is zoned R-2-5/Residential Single and Two Family. For single-family dwellings, the R-2-5 zone requires a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet. The zone also requires the lot to be at least 50 square feet wide and have at least 40 feet of frontage along a public street.

The subject property is 2,662 square feet and 45 feet wide. Given that the subject property is zoned R-2-5, was a lot of record prior to December 28, 1951 and does not meet the R-2-5 zone’s minimum lot size nor lot width requirements, Zoning Ordinance Section 12-401 applies and states:

Any lot in the . . . R-2-5 . . .residence zones, which lot was of record on December 28, 1951, and continuously thereafter, but which lot has less area or less width at the front lot line or front building line than the minimum required for use in the zone where it is situated (referred to hereafter in this section as a substandard lot), may be developed only with a single-family dwelling and its accessory buildings, subject to the following provisions:

- (A) No person has at any time from and after May 14, 1974, contemporaneously held any present or future freehold estate, except as trustee only, or an equitable interest of like quantum, in the substandard lot and in any contiguous land; and
- (B) A special use permit is granted under the provisions of section 11-500; and
- (C) City council, upon consideration of the special use permit, finds that the proposed development will not unreasonably impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, will not diminish or impair the established property values in the surrounding areas, and will be compatible with the existing neighborhood character.

Because the subject property is surrounded by alleys and unimproved right-of-way, it does not have any “contiguous land.” Section 12-401(A) would be met. Therefore, City Council may consider a SUP request for development of the subject property with a single-family dwelling. In order to approve the SUP, City Council must find that the proposal meets the requirements of sections 11-500 and 12-401(C).

The subject property also has no street frontage. Zoning Ordinance Section 7-1007 allows for lots without frontage on a public street to be developed with SUP approval. In determining which yard would be considered the subject property’s front, the proposal must be analyzed for compliance with Zoning Ordinance section 11-504, including but not limited to subsections (B)(10) and (11). These provisions require that the proposed development be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood character.

The existing lot and proposed dwelling would meet all other zoning requirements. The following table provides a summary of all zoning regulations as they pertain to the subject property and proposed dwelling:

Table 1 – Zoning Analysis

	Required	Proposed
Lot Area	5,000 Sq. Ft.	2,662 Sq. Ft.*
Lot Width	Min. 50.0 Ft.	45.0 Ft.*
Lot Frontage	Min. 40.0 Ft.	0 Ft.
Front Yard	Min. 20 Ft. (between the range of all lots within the contextual block face)	20 Ft. (Main Building) 17 Ft. (Open Porch)
Side Yard (East)	7.0 Ft. (Main Building) (1:3 height to setback ratio, 7 Ft. min.) 1.0 Ft. (ADU)	7.0 Ft. (Main Building) 24.25 Ft. (ADU)
Side Yard (West)	7.0 Ft. (Main Building) (1:3 height to setback ratio, 7 Ft. min.) 1.0 Ft. (ADU)	7.0 Ft. (Main Building) 1.0 Ft. (ADU)
Rear Yard	19. Ft. (Main Building) (1:1 height to setback ratio, 7 Ft. min.) 0 Ft. (ADU)**	19.83 Ft. (Main Building) 0 Ft. (ADU)
Net Floor Area	1,197 Sq. Ft. 0.45 Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	1,096 Sq. Ft. 0.45 Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
Height	Max. 30.0 Ft. (Main Building) Max. Height of main building or 20 Ft., whichever is lesser (ADU)	19.80 Ft. (Main Building) 12.45 Ft. (ADU)
Threshold Height	Max. 3.67 Ft.	1.58 Ft.

*Deficiency resulting in a substandard lot

**Per Section 7-1003, one-half of the width of an alley to the rear of a property can be used to comply with the rear yard setback

MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The proposed single-family residential use is consistent with the Potomac West Small Area Plan which designates this area for medium-density residential development.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff supports the applicants' proposal. As required by Zoning Ordinance section 12-401(C), the proposed development would not impact light nor air supply to adjacent properties, diminish nor impair property values, and would be compatible with existing neighborhood character in terms of height, bulk, and design.

LIGHT AND AIR

The proposed design of the new dwelling would meet the required side, rear, and front yard setbacks established by the R-2-5 zone, providing adequate light and air to the adjacent parcels. In addition, the property is surrounded by alleys and public right-of-way, which provide further setback from the adjacent properties.

PROPERTY VALUES

The City’s Real Estate Department assessed the property as a vacant lot with no building valuation. The development of a new dwelling on the vacant lot would increase the assessed value for the property. This would increase the assessed value of comparably sized properties in the neighborhood. The new infill construction will not adversely affect surrounding property values.

HEIGHT

Staff finds the proposed dwelling to be compatible with neighborhood character in terms of height. In this case, the heights for all adjacent houses surrounding the parcel were examined (Figure 8). The height of the dwellings on these properties, as measured to the roof ridgeline, is shown in Table 2.

Staff finds the height of the proposed two-story dwelling to be compatible with the neighborhood, overall. The 1400 block of Mount Vernon Avenue and 400 block of East Alexandria Ave, which contains the subject property includes a mix of one and two-story single-family dwellings as well as two story semi-detached, multifamily and townhouse dwellings. The proposed dwelling would be one of the shorter dwellings of the surrounding buildings to this property.

Table 2 – Dwelling Heights

Address	Height of roof ridge
1413 Mt Vernon Ave	16.75 Ft.
Proposed Dwelling at 404-A E. Alexandria Ave	21.02 Ft.
1403 Mt Vernon Ave	25.92 Ft.
1409 Mt Vernon Ave	25.92 Ft.
Average Height	26.96 Ft.
1401 Mt Vernon Ave	27.92 Ft.
1405 Mt Vernon Ave	27.92 Ft.
1407 Mt Vernon Ave	27.92 Ft.
1411 Mt Vernon Ave	27.92 Ft.
404 E. Alexandria Ave	27.92 Ft.
406 E. Alexandria Ave	27.92 Ft.
408 E. Alexandria Ave	33.50 Ft.

BULK

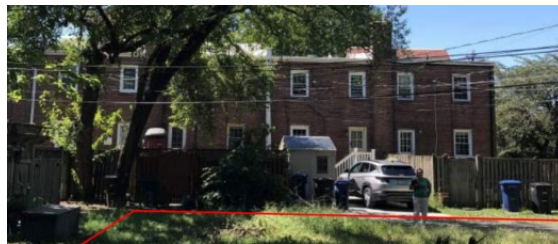
Staff finds the applicants’ proposal compatible with neighborhood character in terms of bulk. The proposed dwelling would be of similar size or smaller in terms of mass and scale than a majority of the other buildings within the block with a significant portion of the floor area below grade. The dwelling is also surrounded by alleys on three sides of the lot and public right of way on the fourth side, providing additional distance from other surrounding dwellings, further reducing the visual impact of the modest dwelling.

DESIGN

While the overall proposed contemporary design would be the first of its kind for this block, the applicant has incorporated architectural elements that are common for the area, such as a rectangular form, gable roof, windows with divided lites, and a partial brick façade.

The design would fit well with the varied architecture along the 400 block of East Alexandria and 1400 block of Mount Vernon Avenues as well as the wider Del Ray neighborhood. Further, the house would be minimally visible from both Mount Vernon Avenue and East Alexandria Avenue.

Examples of rectangular structures on Mount Vernon and East Alexandria Avenues:



Examples of gable roofs along Mount Vernon and East Alexandria Avenues:



Staff has included further design analysis with regard to the subject property's lack of public street frontage in the following section.

LOT WITHOUT FRONTAGE

While staff is not aware of any other lots without frontage in Del Ray, the applicants' proposed design would compensate for the unique configuration of the subject property. First, the smaller lot size, as compared to the surrounding lots, necessitates a smaller and shorter dwelling than those that surround it. Second, the low-pitched roof would reduce the dwelling's perceived height and bulk. Third, unlike typical dwellings with basements that are only partially below grade, the proposed dwelling's basement would be fully below grade, which hides its bulk from view. Further, having the first floor close to the actual grade level reduces the overall building height.

Any amount of the basement above grade would make the dwelling seem larger visually and would make it physically taller. Overall, while the site is unique, the proposed dwelling's size, height, and design features would mimic the appearance of an accessory building. The proposed dwelling would therefore fit on this challenging site without changing the essential character of the neighborhood.

Staff finds this lot to have sufficient vehicular and pedestrian access as it is surrounded by alleys and public right of way. The alley off Mount Vernon Avenue would provide vehicular access to the property, just as it already serves the driveway to the dwellings located at 1413 and 1409 Mount Vernon Avenue. Pedestrians could access the subject property from the alleys off Mount Vernon and East Alexandria Avenues and the adjacent public right of way.

Regarding which yard would be considered the subject property's front yard, staff found the proposed orientation to be compatible with the surrounding properties. Without exception, the dwellings that surround the subject property are located on rectangular lots with their front yards placed along one of the short sides of the lot. The proposed design would mirror this configuration. Also, the proposed design orients the rear of the dwelling toward the rear of the dwellings along East Alexandria Ave, and one side yard toward the rear of the dwellings along Mount Vernon Avenue. The front yard orientation is the most appropriate toward the alley where vehicular access is already being used for the existing dwelling at 1413 Mount Vernon Avenue.



Figure 7 – Aerial showing orientation of existing buildings

PARKING REDUCTION

Staff supports the request for a parking reduction. Providing two parking spaces on the site is infeasible due to the limited maneuverability on the narrow alleys, small lot size, and utility equipment located within the alley to the north. In addition, many of the surrounding dwellings do not provide off-street parking, and there is still ample on-street parking on both Mount Vernon and East Alexandria Avenues. The property is close to several bus routes along both Mount Vernon and East Monroe Avenues, about a half mile from the Braddock metro station, and walkable to essential neighborhood amenities including a grocery store and a pharmacy. This reduction aligns with the Zoning for Housing text amendments to reduce parking requirements for residential dwellings.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Community Engagement

The applicants met with the surrounding neighbors on November 2, 2023, and at the Del Ray Land Use committee meeting on November 7, 2023. The Del Ray Citizens' Association provided a letter to staff and the applicants outlining their concerns with the project, which include the design, emergency access, stormwater management, the FAR basement exclusion and setbacks, the impact of utility lines, the impact on neighboring trees, vision clearance at the alley entrances, and the use of the accessory dwelling unit as a short-term rental.

Design

While this is the only alley lot in the Del Ray neighborhood, as described in detail above, the applicants' design is sensitive to its unique configuration.

Emergency access

Emergency vehicle access is required within 100 feet of a dwelling's main entrance. The entrance of the proposed dwelling is roughly 107 feet from Mount Vernon Avenue. The applicants would be required to request a code modification through Code Administration during the building permit process and provide further fire protection to the dwelling to the satisfaction of the fire department and Code Administration. The Fire Department and Department of Code Administration would ensure that all life safety requirements are met under any future building permit reviews. SUP approval would not preclude necessary improvements or changes to the building or site to ensure life safety requirements are met.

Stormwater management

Compliance with stormwater requirements will be ensured during the grading plan process.

FAR basement exclusion and setbacks

Per Section 2-120, a basement shall only count as floor area where the average finished grade is four feet or more below the bottom of first floor construction. Per Section 2-150.2, average finished grade is calculated by averaging the surface level elevations at 10-foot intervals around the perimeter of the proposed building, which includes the basement. Figure 8 shows the points used to calculate average finished grade from the bottom of the first floor.

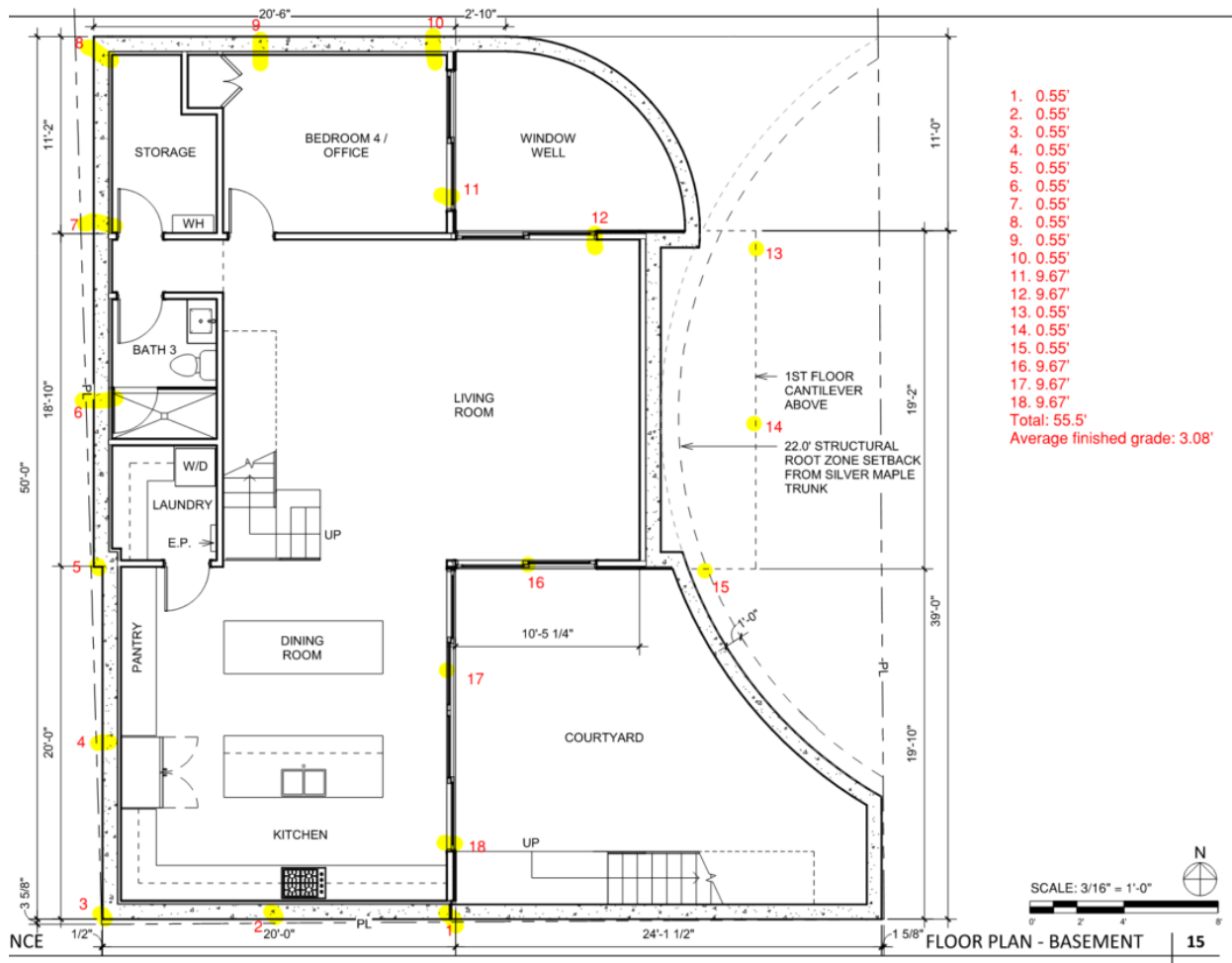


Figure 8 – Average finished grade calculation

Per Section 2-193, setback to height ratio is based upon the height of each portion of the building above average pre-construction grade. The basement is fully below average pre-construction grade. The basement and courtyard must be fully on private property.

Utility line relocation

The property currently has extensive utility lines running above the site. If approved, the applicants must work with Dominion to reconfigure the lines prior to starting construction on the site. If the reconfiguration results in any significant changes to the plan, then the applicants will be required to request a Special Use Permit for the new design per condition #1.

Trees

An existing Silver Maple tree is located within the public right-of-way to the east of the property. The applicant has made significant design adjustments to ensure the tree’s critical root zone would not be impacted. Further, the applicants would be required to adhere to tree protection measures as outlined in the City’s landscape guidelines. If these measures fail, the applicants shall be

required to either replace the tree as determined by the City Arborist or pay a contribution fee of \$2,500 per condition #5. In addition, the adjacent properties contain two Siberian Elms, a Northern Catalpa, and a White Mulberry that could be affected by construction work on the subject property. The applicant will be required to notify the immediate property owners of the potential impact to their trees and take measures to ensure minimal impacts per condition #3 and #4.

Vision clearance at alley entrance

Both alleys' intersections with East Alexandria and Mount Vernon Avenues are existing and are currently utilized by adjacent property owners to access off-street parking areas. The applicant proposes no changes to these intersections. The alley's entrance complies with the City's vision clearance requirements.

Short term rental

Section 7-203(B)(7) prohibits an ADU to be used as a short-term rental for more than 120 days per year.

CONCLUSION

Staff found that the proposal would meet all approval criteria. Staff recommends approval of the SUP request subject to the conditions contained in Section III of this report.

III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances, and the following conditions:

1. The dwelling's bulk, height, and design, including materials, shall be substantially consistent with the application materials submitted December 14, 2023 to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning. (P&Z)
2. A minimum 25 percent canopy coverage shall be provided. (P&Z)
3. The applicant shall install all tree protection fencing prior to demolition of the site or structures, delivery of materials (stockpiling), and/or placement or operation of heavy machinery on the site. (P&Z)
4. The applicant shall notify owners of the immediately adjacent properties of the potential impact to trees on their properties as a result of construction prior to the application of the grading plan and provide delivery information for the correspondence. The applicant shall ensure tree protection of neighboring trees by reducing the limit of disturbance around the trees as much as possible, root pruning, root matting and similar best practices. (P&Z)
5. If tree protection measures fail for trees located on public property, the applicant shall be responsible for planting a replacement tree as determined by the City Arborist or paying the City \$2,500 replacement fee. (RPCA)

6. The applicant shall be responsible for repairs to any adjacent City right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
7. The applicant shall repave the portion of the public alley abutting the subject property to the west. (T&ES)
8. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)
9. The applicant shall install a backflow preventer on the sanitary sewer lateral connection to the basement and provide notation of this on the grading plan and building permit. (T&ES)
10. The Applicant shall install a minimum of one (1) bollard near the electrical box to prevent vehicles from striking the equipment. (T&ES)

STAFF: Rachel Drescher, Urban Planner, Department of Planning and Zoning
 Sam Shelby, Principal Planner, Department of Planning and Zoning
 Tony LaColla, AICP, Division Chief, Department of Planning and Zoning

Staff Note: In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the Zoning Ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 36 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Transportation & Environmental Services:

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria’s Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). In order to comply with this code requirement, the applicant shall provide a completed Recycling Implementation Plan (RIP) Form within 60 days of SUP approval. Contact the City’s Recycling Program Coordinator at (703) 746-4410, or via e-mail at commercialrecycling@alexandriava.gov, for information about completing this form. (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 Section 5-1-42- Collection by Private collectors. (c) Time of collection. Solid waste shall be collected from all premises not serviced by the city at least once each week. No

collections may be made between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. (6:00 a.m. from May 1, through September 30) if the collection area is less than 500 feet from a residential area. (T&ES)

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Building permit is required.

Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities:

F-1 If tree protection measures fail for any tree located on public property, the applicant shall be responsible for planting a replacement tree as determined by the City Arborist or paying a \$2,500 replacement fee to the City. Due to the site location, suitable replacements would be a +2" caliper London plain tree, American elm variety, red oak species, sweetgum, or ginkgo (male only). If the precautions are followed to protect the tree, the chances of survivability would be moderate to high.

Police Department:

No comments received.

Fire Department:

C-1 EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS as required in the City of Alexandria Code D101.1 Requirements. The following requirements shall be followed when designing emergency vehicle access:

1. Access for emergency vehicles shall be provided to within 100 feet of the main or principal entrance to every building. The access shall be provided by a public or private street or parking lot.

In the event access is not available a code modification will be required.



APPLICATION SPECIAL USE PERMIT

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

T # _____

PROPERTY LOCATION: 404-A East A

ndria Ave

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 43.04

ZONE: R-2-5

APPLICANT:

Name: Eric Teran and Daniela Gross

Address: 2800 N. Rosser

, Alexandria, VA 22311

PROPOSED USE: Single Family Resid

e

- THE UNDERSIGNED, hereby applies for a Article XI, Section 4-11-500 of the 1992 Zon
- THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained p permission to the City of Alexandria sta photograph the building premises, land etc.,
- THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission to the City of Alexandria to post is requested, pursuant to Article IV, Section of Alexandria, Virginia.
- THE UNDERSIGNED, hereby attests that including all surveys, drawings, etc., require accurate to the best of their knowledge and materials, drawings or illustrations submitt representations made to the Director of Pla the applicant unless those materials or re illustrative of general plans and intentions, Section 11-207(A)(10), of the 1992 Zoning O

al Use Permit in accordance with the provisions of rdinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

ssion from the property owner, hereby grants d Commission Members to visit, inspect, and ected with the application.

ission from the property owner, hereby grants rd notice on the property for which this application 04(D)(7) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City

the information herein provided and specifically e furnished by the applicant are true, correct and f. The applicant is hereby notified that any written support of this application and any specific oral and Zoning on this application will be binding on ntations are clearly stated to be non-binding or ect to substantial revision, pursuant to Article XI, nce of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Eric Teran
 Print Name of Applicant or Agent
2800 N. Rosser ST.
 Mailing/Street Address
Alexandria, VA 22311
 City and State Zip Code

8/14/23
 Signature Date
202.569.9620 _____
 Telephone # Fax #
eteran@eustilus.com
 Email address

PROPERTY OWNER AUTHORIZATION

As the property owner of 404-A East Alexandria Ave, I hereby
(Property Address)
grant the applicant authorization to apply for the SUP use as
(use)
described in this application.

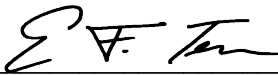
Name: Eric Teran

Phone: 202.569.9620

Please Print

Address: _____

Email: eteran@eustilus.com

Signature: 

Date: 8/14/23

1. Floor Plan and Plot Plan. As a part of this application, the applicant is required to submit a floor plan and plot or site plan with the parking layout of the proposed use. The SUP application checklist lists the requirements of the floor and site plans. The Planning Director may waive requirements for plan submission upon receipt of a written request which adequately justifies a waiver.

Required floor plan and plot/site plan attached.

Requesting a waiver. See attached written request.

2. The applicant is the (check one):

Owner

Contract Purchaser

Lessee or

Other: _____ of the subject property.

State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant or owner, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent.

NA

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 three 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. Eric Teran		50%
2. Daniela Gross		50%
3.		

2. Property. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the property located at 2800 N. Rosser ST, Alexandria, VA 22311 (address), unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three 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. NA		
2.		
3.		

3. Business or Financial Relationships. Each person or entity indicated above in sections 1 and 2, with an ownership interest in the applicant or in the subject property are 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. **All fields must be filled out completely. Do not leave blank. (If there are no relationships please indicate each person or entity and "None" in the corresponding fields).**

For a list of current council, commission and board members, as well as the definition of business and financial relationship, [click here](#).

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. NA		
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.

8/14/23

Eric Teran

Date

Printed Name

Signature

USE CHARACTERISTICS

4. The proposed special use permit request is for (*check one*):
- a new use requiring a special use permit,
 - an expansion or change to an existing use without a special use permit,
 - an expansion or change to an existing use with a special use permit,
 - other. Please describe: _____

5. Please describe the capacity of the proposed use:

- A. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect?
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

NA

- B. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect?
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

NA

6. Please describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:

Day:
NA

Hours:
NA

7. Please describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use.

- A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.

NA

- B. How will the noise be controlled?

NA

- Describe any potential odors emanating from the proposed use and plans to control them:

NA

9. Please provide information regarding trash and litter generated by the use.

- A. What type of trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. office paper, food wrappers)
Typical of a single family residence

- B. How much trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. # of bags or pounds per day or per week)
Typical of a single family residence

- C. How often will trash be collected?
Weekly per the trash collection schedule for this neighborhood

- D. How will you prevent littering on the property, streets and nearby properties?

NA

10. Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

Yes. No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

- Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

Yes. No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

2. What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of nearby residents, employees and patrons?

NA

ALCOHOL SALES

13.

- A. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?

Yes No

If yes, describe existing (if applicable) and proposed alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales.

PARKING AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

14. A. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:

1 Standard spaces
_____ Compact spaces
_____ Handicapped accessible spaces.
_____ Other.

Planning and Zoning Staff Only
Required number of spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200A _____
Does the application meet the requirement? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

B. Where is required parking located? (*check one*)

on-site
 off-site

If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located?

PLEASE NOTE: Pursuant to Section 8-200 (C) of the Zoning Ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.

C. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to Section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the Zoning Ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

[X] Parking reduction requested; see attached supplemental form

15. Please provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

A. How many loading spaces are available for the use? NA

Planning and Zoning Staff Only
Required number of loading spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200 _____
Does the application meet the requirement? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Where are o street loading facilities located? NA

C. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?
NA

D. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?
NA

16. Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?

Access is through an alley

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

17. Will the proposed uses be located in an existing building? Yes No

Do you propose to construct an addition to the building? Yes No

How large will the addition be? _____ square feet.

18. What will the total area occupied by the proposed use be?

0 sq. ft. (existing) + 870 sq. ft. (addition if any) = 870 sq. ft. (total)

19. The proposed use is located in: (*check one*)

a stand alone building

a house located in a residential zone

a warehouse

a shopping center. Please provide name of the center: _____

an office building. Please provide name of the building: _____

other. Please describe: _____

End of Application



Department of Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application Checklist

Supplemental application for the following uses:

- Automobile Oriented
- Parking Reduction
- Signs
- Substandard Lot
- Lot modifications requested with SUP use

Interior Floor Plan

- Include labels to indicate the use of the space (doors, windows, seats, tables, counters, equipment)

If Applicable

- Plan for outdoor uses

Contextual site image

- Show subject site, on-site parking area, surrounding buildings, cross streets



APPLICATION - SUPPLEMENTAL

PARKING REDUCTION

Supplemental information to be completed by applicants requesting special use permit approval of a reduction in the required parking pursuant to section 8-100(A)(4) or (5).

1. Describe the requested parking reduction. (e.g. number of spaces, stacked parking, size, off-site location)

To provide one standard size parking space instead of two on a residential lot in the R-2-5 zone.

2. Provide a statement of justification for the proposed parking reduction.

There are major bus routes on Mt. Vernon Ave. less than 100' from the lot and a metro stop approximately 3,000 feet from the lot.

3. Why is it not feasible to provide the required parking?

The lot is difficult to pull in and out for two cars due to the narrow alley and existing conditions.

4. Will the proposed reduction reduce the number of available parking spaces below the number of existing parking spaces?

_____ Yes. No.

5. If the requested reduction is for more than five parking spaces, the applicant must submit a *Parking Management Plan* which identifies the location and number of parking spaces both on-site and off-site, the availability of on-street parking, any proposed methods of mitigating negative affects of the parking reduction.

6. The applicant must also demonstrate that the reduction in parking will not have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.



Department of Planning and Zoning

Floor Area Ratio and Open Space Calculations for Single and Two-Family Residential Outside Historic Districts

A

A. Property Information

A1. Street Address R-2-5
 Zone

A2. Total Lot Area \times Floor Area Ratio Allowed by Zone = Maximum Allowable Floor Area

B. Existing Gross Floor Area

<u>Existing Gross Area</u>		<u>Allowable Exclusions**</u>		
Basement	<input type="text"/>	Basement**	<input type="text"/>	B1. <input type="text" value="0.00"/> Sq. Ft.
First Floor	<input type="text"/>	Stairways**	<input type="text"/>	Existing Gross Floor Area*
Second Floor	<input type="text"/>	Mechanical**	<input type="text"/>	B2. <input type="text" value="0.00"/> Sq. Ft.
Third Floor	<input type="text"/>	Attic less than 7'***	<input type="text"/>	Allowable Floor Exclusions**
Attic	<input type="text"/>	Porches**	<input type="text"/>	B3. <input type="text" value="0.00"/> Sq. Ft.
Porches	<input type="text"/>	Balcony/Deck**	<input type="text"/>	Existing Floor Area Minus Exclusions (subtract B2 from B1)
Balcony/Deck	<input type="text"/>	Garage**	<input type="text"/>	Comments for Existing Gross Floor Area <div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 40px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>
Garage	<input type="text"/>	Other***	<input type="text"/>	
Other***	<input type="text"/>	Other***	<input type="text"/>	
B1. Total Gross	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	B2. Total Exclusions	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	

C. Proposed Gross Floor Area

<u>Proposed Gross Area</u>		<u>Allowable Exclusions**</u>		
Basement	<input type="text" value="1,222.00"/>	Basement**	<input type="text" value="1,222.00"/>	C1. <input type="text" value="2,807.00"/> Sq. Ft.
First Floor	<input type="text" value="587.00"/>	Stairways**	<input type="text" value="78.00"/>	Proposed Gross Floor Area*
Second Floor	<input type="text" value="587.00"/>	Mechanical**	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	C2. <input type="text" value="1,711.00"/> Sq. Ft.
Third Floor	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	Attic less than 7'***	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	Allowable Floor Exclusions**
Attic	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	Porches**	<input type="text" value="81.00"/>	C3. <input type="text" value="1,096.00"/> Sq. Ft.
Porches	<input type="text" value="81.00"/>	Balcony/Deck**	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	Proposed Floor Area Minus Exclusions (subtract C2 from C1)
Balcony/Deck	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	Garage**	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	
Garage	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	Other***	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>	
Other***	<input type="text" value="330.00 ADU"/>	Other***	<input type="text" value="330.00 ADU"/>	
C1. Total Gross	<input type="text" value="2,807.00"/>	C2. Total Exclusions	<input type="text" value="1,711.00"/>	

Noes

*Gross floor area for residential single and two-family dwellings in the R-20, R-12, R-8, R-5, R-2-5, RB and RA zones (not including properties located within a Historic District) is the sum of all areas under roof of a lot, measured from exterior walls.

** Refer to the Zoning Ordinance (Section 2-145(A)) and consult with Zoning Staff for information regarding allowable exclusions. Sections may also be required for some exclusions.

*** Refer to the Zoning Ordinance (Section 2-145(A)) and consult with Zoning Staff for additional allowable exclusions. Additional exclusions may include space under balconies, retractable awnings, etc.

D. Total Floor Area

D1. Sq. Ft.
Total Floor Area (add B3 and C3)

D2. Sq. Ft.
Total Floor Area Allowed by Zone (A2)

E. Open Space (RA & RB Zones)

E1. Sq. Ft.
Existing Open Space

E2. Sq. Ft.
Required Open Space

E3. Sq. Ft.
Proposed Open Space

The undersigned hereby certifies and attests that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the above computations are true and correct.

Signature:

GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301



- ALEXANDRIA VACANT LOTS 1
- DEL REY VACANT LOTS 2
- DEL REY SIMILAR LOTS 3
- SITE PHOTOS 4
- HEIGHT STUDY 12
- PROJECT INFORMATION 13
- SITE PLAN 14
- FLOOR PLANS 15
- ELEVATIONS 19
- SECTIONS 23
- SHADOW STUDY 27
- PARKING DIAGRAM 30
- FIRE DIAGRAM 31
- LANDSCAPE NOTES 32
- LANDSCAPE PLANS 33
- LANDSCAPE DETAILS 34
- RENDERINGS 36
- MATERIAL COMPATIBILITY 41

EUSTILUS architecture

2800 N.ROSSER ST.
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22311

202.569.9620
WWW.EUSTILUS.COM
ETERAN@EUSTILUS.COM

5213 FILLMORE AVE
 5233 SEMINARY RD
 2715 N ROSSER ST
 2211 & 2213 IVOR LA
 1101 FINLEY LA
 1321 N. PEGRAM ST



DEL REY MAP, PAGE 2

2010 LA GRANDE AVE.

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.

906 JUNOIR ST

1119 QUEEN ST

17 W LINDEN ST

1215 A CAMERON ST

310 A PRINCESS ST

211 COMMERCE ST

219 A S FAYETTE ST

308 N. QUAKER LA

16 VACANT LOTS PER THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:

1. VACANT LOTS CLASSIFIED AS RESIDENTIAL
 2. VACANT LOTS NOT OWNED BY THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
 3. VACANT LOTS NOT OWNED BY THE ADJACENT OWNER
 4. VACANT LOTS NOT BEING USED FOR PARKING
- *PER THE ALEXANDRIA GIS PARCEL VIEWER

GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301



2010 LA GRANDE AVE.

NEIGHBORHOOD AREA,
PAGE 3

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.

- 2 VACANT LOTS PER THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:
1. VACANT LOTS CLASSIFIED AS RESIDENTIAL
 2. VACANT LOTS NOT OWNED BY THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
 3. VACANT LOTS NOT OWNED BY THE ADJACENT OWNER
 4. VACANT LOTS NOT BEING USED FOR PARKING
- *PER THE ALEXANDRIA GIS PARCEL VIEWER

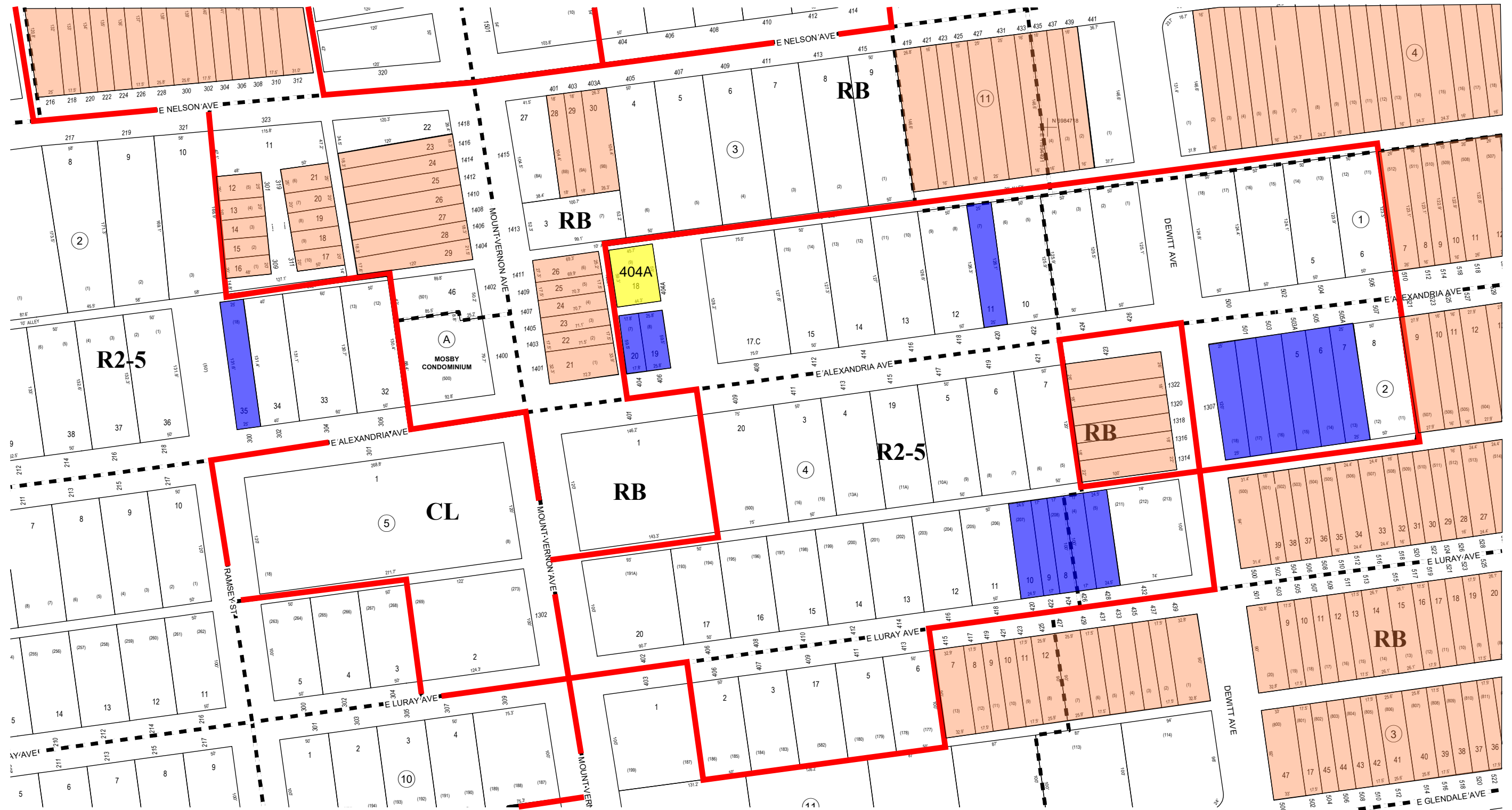
GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301


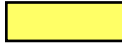


DEL REY - VACANT LOTS

2

EUSTILUS architecture



LEGEND

	ZONE BOUNDARY
	R-2-5 404A, SUBJECT PROPERTY
	R-2-5 15 LOTS SIMILAR SIZE
	RB 134 LOTS SIMILAR SIZE

GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

DEL REY - NEIGHBORING SIMILAR LOT SIZES

3

EUSTILUS architecture



1. NORTHWEST CORNER OF MT. VERNON AVE. & E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



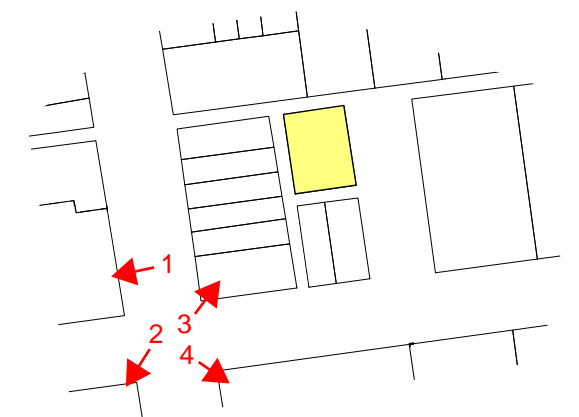
2. NORTHEAST CORNER OF MT. VERNON AVE. & E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



3. SOUTHWEST CORNER OF MT. VERNON AVE. & E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



4. SOUTHEAST CORNER OF MT. VERNON AVE. & E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SITE PHOTOS

4

EUSTILUS architecture



1. 1413 MT. VERNON AVE. NORTH OF PUBLIC ALLEY ENTRANCE



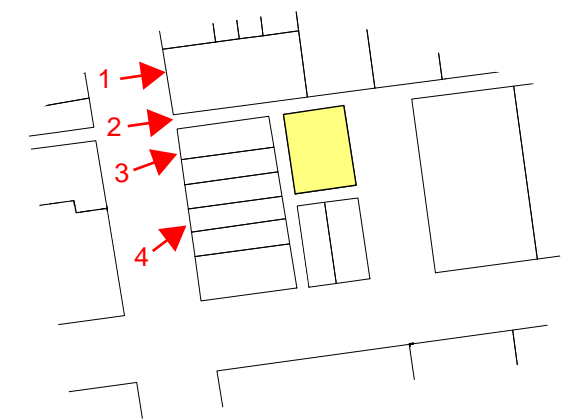
2. PUBLIC ALLEY ENTRANCE FROM MT. VERNON AVE.



3. 1405 - 1411 MT. VERNON AVE., PUBLIC ALLEY ENTRY ON THE LEFT



4. 1401 - 1407 MT. VERNON AVE.



GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SITE PHOTOS

5

EUSTILUS architecture



1. VIEW OF 1401 MT. VERNON AVE. ALONG E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



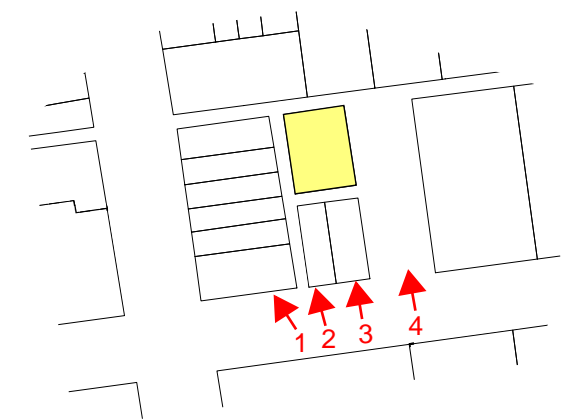
2. PUBLIC ALLEY ENTRY FROM E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



3. 404 & 406 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., PUBLIC ALLEY ENTRY ON THE LEFT



4. VACANT LAND BETWEEN 406 & 408 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SITE PHOTOS

6

EUSTILUS architecture



1. VACANT LAND BETWEEN 406 & 408 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., 404A BACK LEFT OF THE PHOTO



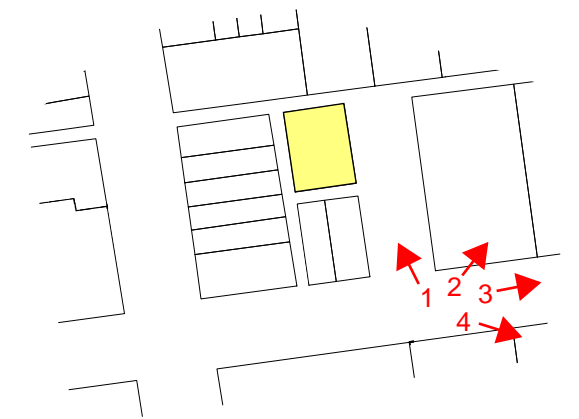
2. 408 - 414 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



3. VIEW EAST ON E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



4. 411 - 413 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SITE PHOTOS

7

EUSTILUS architecture



1. PUBLIC ALLEY LOOKING WEST TO MT. VERNON AVE FROM 404A



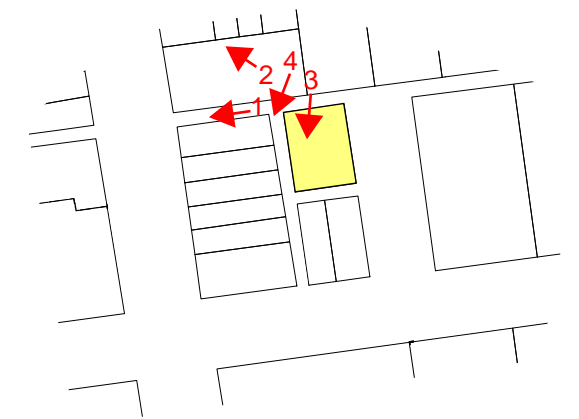
2. 1413 MT. VERNON AVE SIDE AND REAR FACADE



3. REAR FACADES OF HOUSES ALONG MT. VERNON AVE. TO THE RIGHT & MT. VERNON AVE. TO THE REAR OF THE PHOTO



4. 1403 TO 1411 MT. VERNON AVE. REAR FACADES



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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SITE PHOTOS

8

EUSTILUS architecture



1. EXISTING UTILITY POLE FOR HOMES AT 1405 TO 1411 MT. VERNON AVE. & 404 TO 406 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.



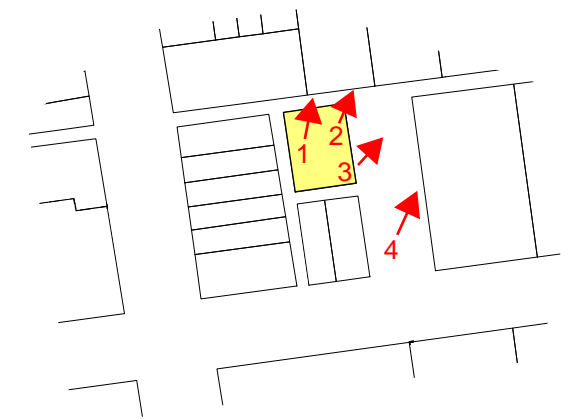
2. LOOKING NORTH FROM 404A TO UTILITY POLE AND REAR HOMES ALONG E. NELSON AVE.



3. 408 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE. DETACHED GARAGE AND ADU



4. 408 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE. WEST SIDE YARD



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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SITE PHOTOS

9

EUSTILUS architecture



1. 404A, APPROXIMATE LOT OUTLINED IN RED



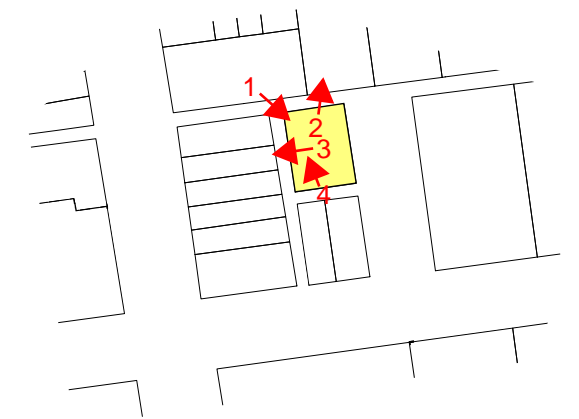
2. LOOKING NORTH FROM 404A



3. REAR FACADES AND YARDS OF 1407 - 1411



4. LOOKING NORTH FROM 404A TO 1413 MT. VERNON AVE. & THE REAR FACADES OF THE ROWHOMES ALONG E. NELSON AVE., APPROXIMATE LOT OUTLINED IN RED



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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SITE PHOTOS

10

EUSTILUS architecture



1. 404A, LOOKING SOUTHEAST, APPROXIMATE LOT OUTLINED IN RED



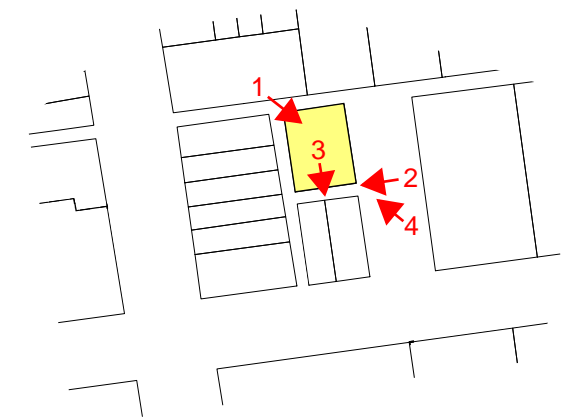
2. 404A, LOOKING WEST, APPROXIMATE LOT OUTLINED IN RED



3. 404A, LOOKING SOUTH AT 404 & 406 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE & ALLEY, APPROXIMATE LOT OUTLINED IN RED



4. LOOKING TOWARDS 404A, APPROXIMATE LOT OUTLINED IN RED



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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SITE PHOTOS

11

EUSTILUS architecture



<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>THRESHOLD</u>	<u>ROOF RIDGE</u>	<u>STORIES</u>
1401 MT. VERNON AVE	3'-6"	27'-11"	2
1403 MT. VERNON AVE	3'-6"	25'-11"	2
1405 MT. VERNON AVE	3'-6"	27'-11"	2
1407 MT. VERNON AVE	3'-6"	27'-11"	2
1409 MT. VERNON AVE	3'-6"	25'-11"	2
1411 MT. VERNON AVE	3'-6"	27'-11"	2
1413 MT. VERNON AVE	0'-6"	16'-9"	1
404 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE	3'-6"	27'-11"	2
406 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE	3'-6"	27'-11"	2
408 E. ALEXANDRIA AVE	3'-8"	33'-6"	2
PROPOSED			
404 A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE	0'-0"	21'-10"	2



PROJECT DATA

OWNER: DANIELA GROSS & ERIC TERAN
 2800 N. ROSSER ST.
 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22311

EXISTING VACANT LOT
 PROPOSED SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE
 SCOPE OF WORK NEW TWO STORY RESIDENCE OVER A
 BASEMENT WITH A DETACHED ADU

APPLICABLE CODES

VIRGINIA RESIDENTIAL CODE 2015

ZONING DATA

MAP-BLOCK-LOT-NUMBER 043.04-03-18
 ZONE R-2-5
 USE GROUP R-3
 CONSTRUCTION TYPE VB

	REQUIRED	PROPOSED
LOT SIZE	5,000 SF	2,661.84 SF
LOT WIDTH	50'-0"	59'-3"
LOT FRONTAGE	40'-0"	45'-8"
BULK REQUIREMENTS		
FRONT YARD SETBACK	20'-0"	20'-0"
REAR YARD SETBACK	1:1	19'-10"
SIDE YARD SETBACK	1:3	7'-0"
HEIGHT LIMIT	30'-0"	19' 10"
FLOOR AREA RATIO	0.45	0.44
1ST FLOOR		587 SF
2ND FLOOR		587 SF
TOTAL		1,174 SF
BASEMENT		1,222 SF
DETACHED GARAGE		314 SF

PUBLIC ALLEY

LOT 26

LOT 25

LOT 24

LOT 23

10' PUBLIC ALLEY

10' PUBLIC ALLEY

10' PUBLIC ALLEY

LOT 20

LOT 19

LOT 18

PROPOSED SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE

PROPOSED DETACHED ADU

BASEMENT COURTYARD

PARKING 1

PORCH ROOF

SOFTSCAPE

ASPHALT PAVING

PERVIOUS PAVING

ASPHALT PAVING

UNDEVELOPED LAND

HOUSE HEIGHT CALCULATIONS		
SPOT	PRE-ELEVATION	POST ELEVATION
1	0.16	0.55
2	0.25	0.55
3	0.32	0.55
4	0.60	0.55
5	0.94	0.55
6	0.90	0.55
7	0.84	0.55
8	0.50	0.55
SUM	4.51	4.40
AVERAGE	0.56	0.55

ROOF EAVE ELEVATIONS	18.30'
PEAK ROOF (HIGHEST RIDGE)	22.33'
ROOF MIDPOINT (ROOF HEIGHT)	20.35'
PROPOSED DWELLING HEIGHT	19.80'

CONDENSOR UNITS

EX. 44" SILVER MAPLE

A203

A300

A301

A202

A303

A200

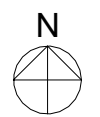
A302

A201

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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

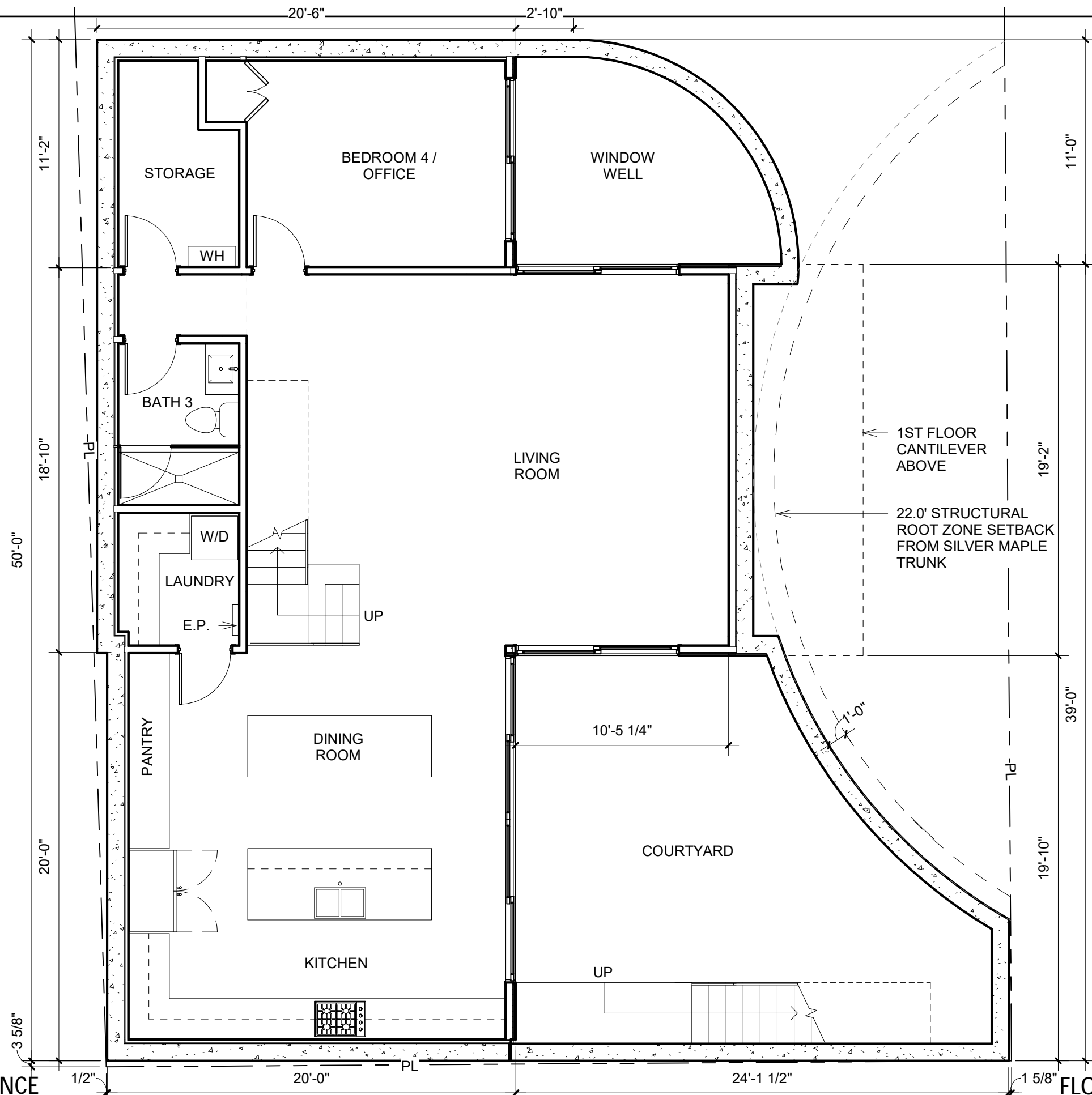
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SITE PLAN

14

EUSTILUS architecture



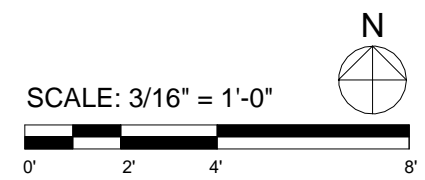
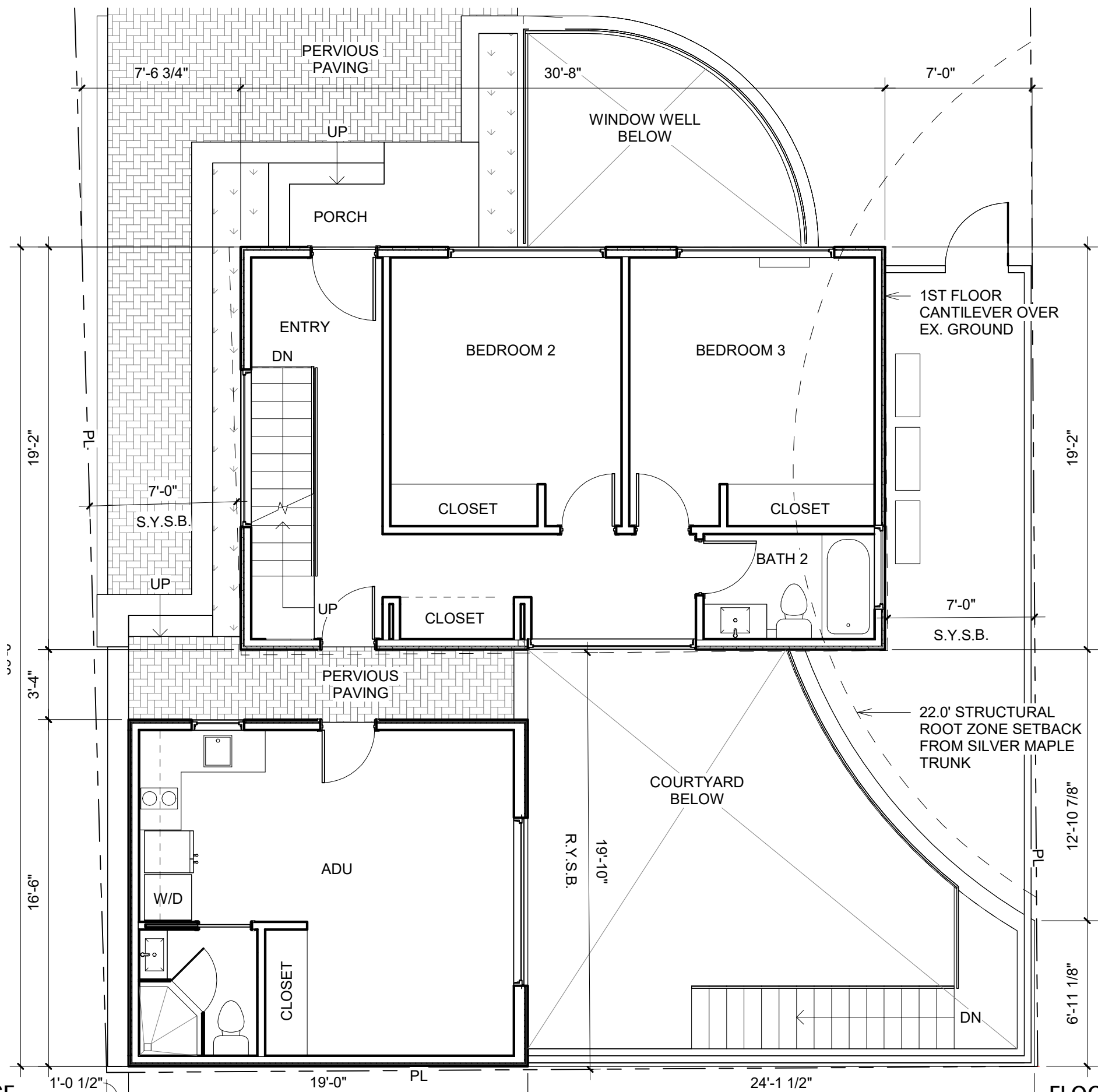
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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

FLOOR PLAN - BASEMENT

EUSTILUS architecture

15



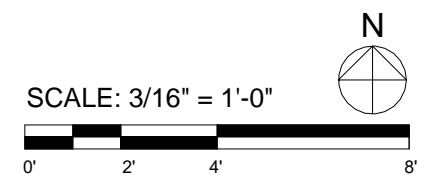
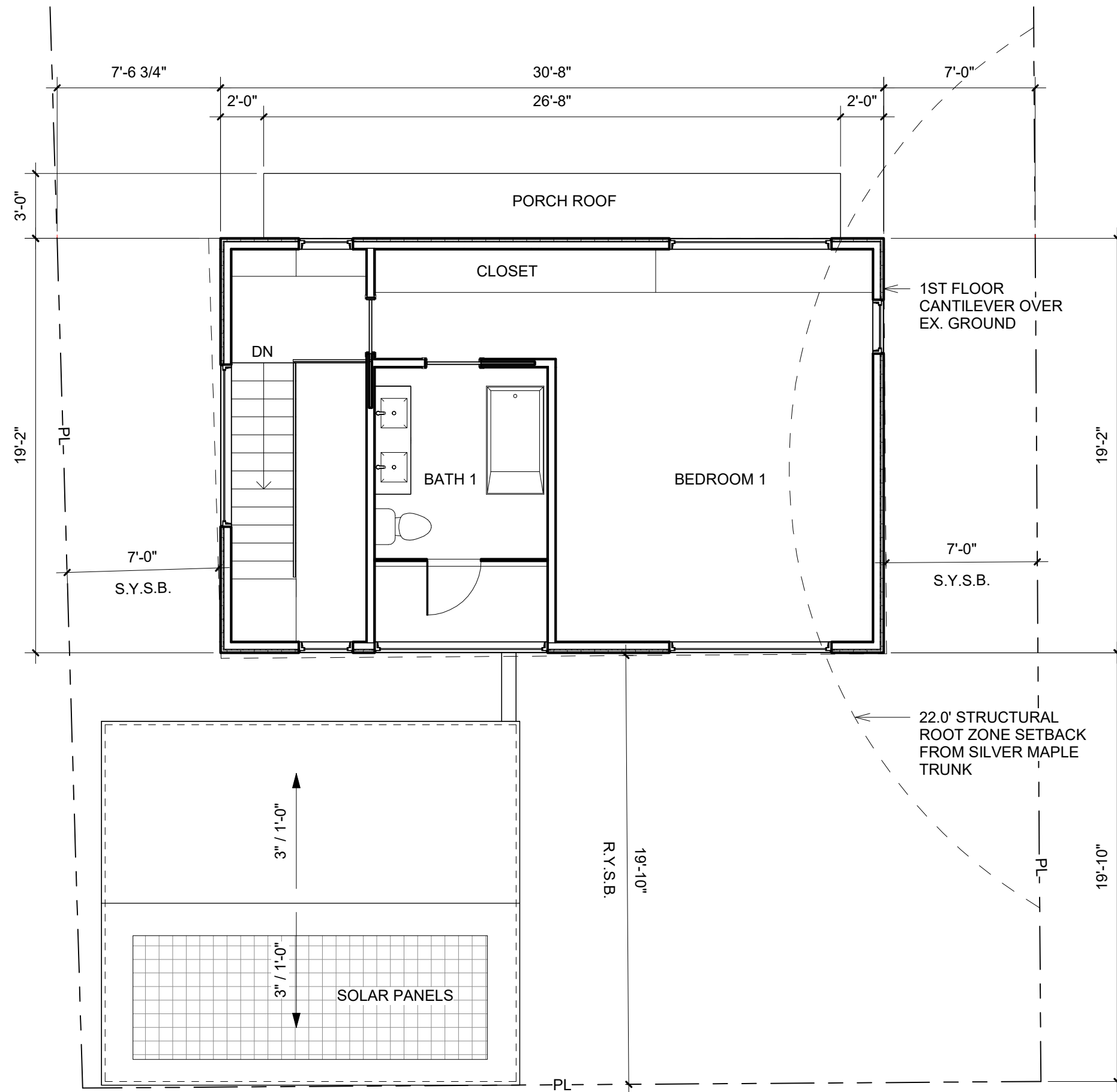
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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

FLOOR PLAN - FIRST FLOOR

16

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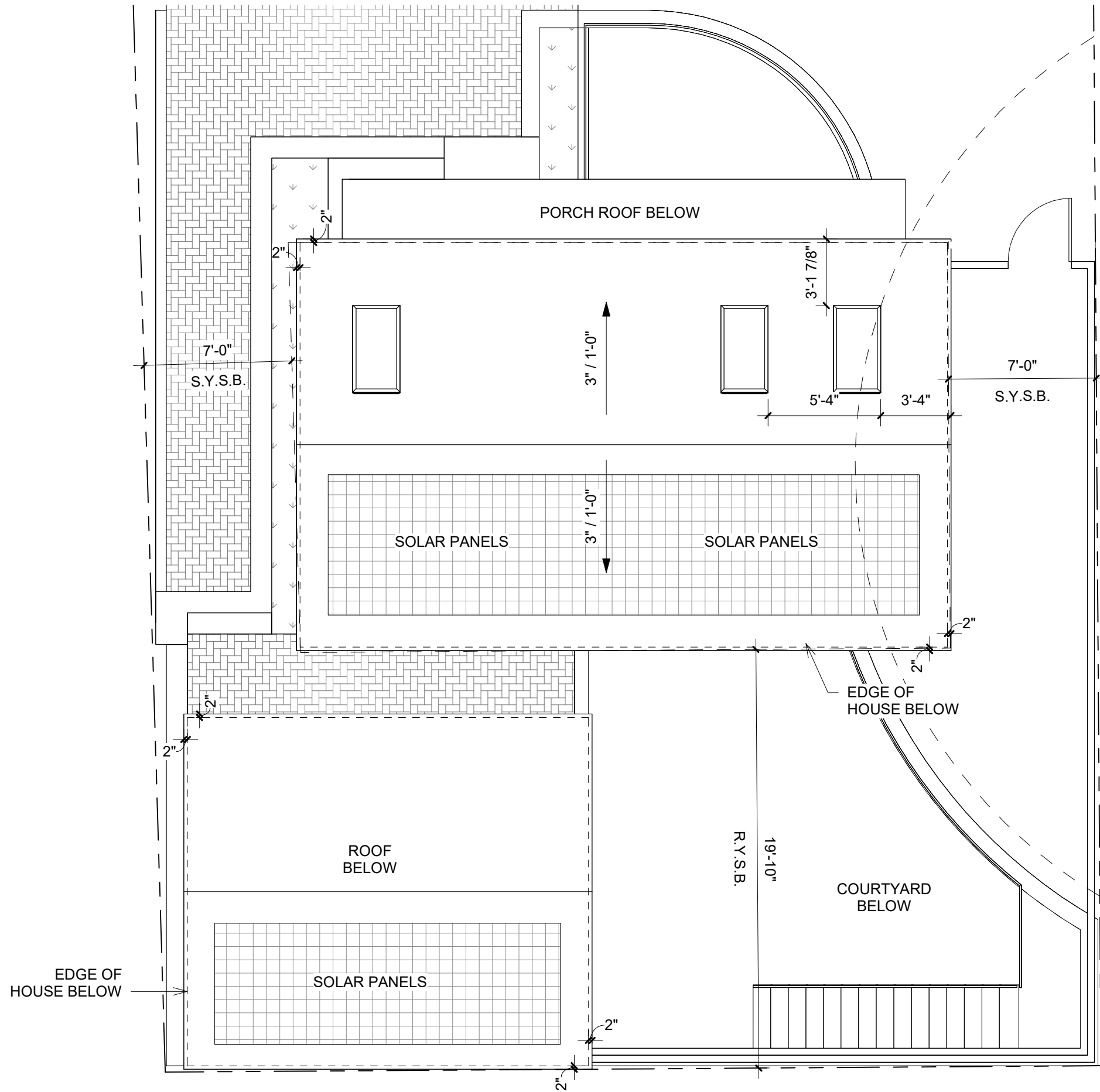
GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

FLOOR PLAN - SECOND FLOOR

EUSTILUS architecture

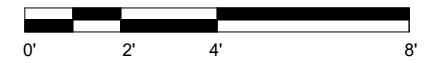
17



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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

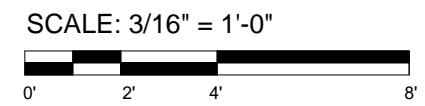
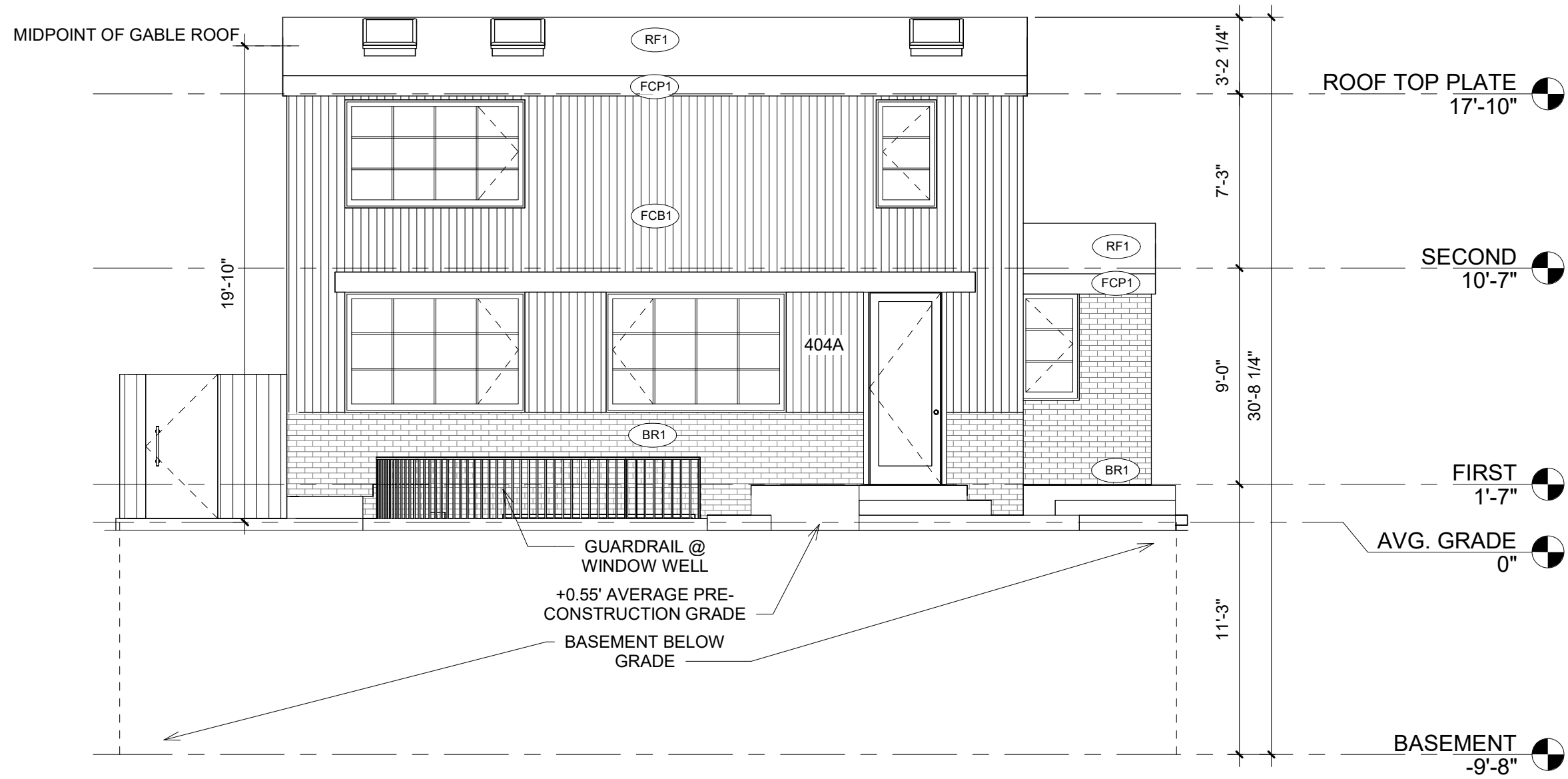
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ROOF PLAN

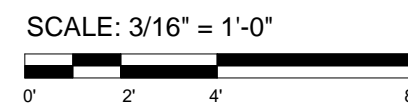
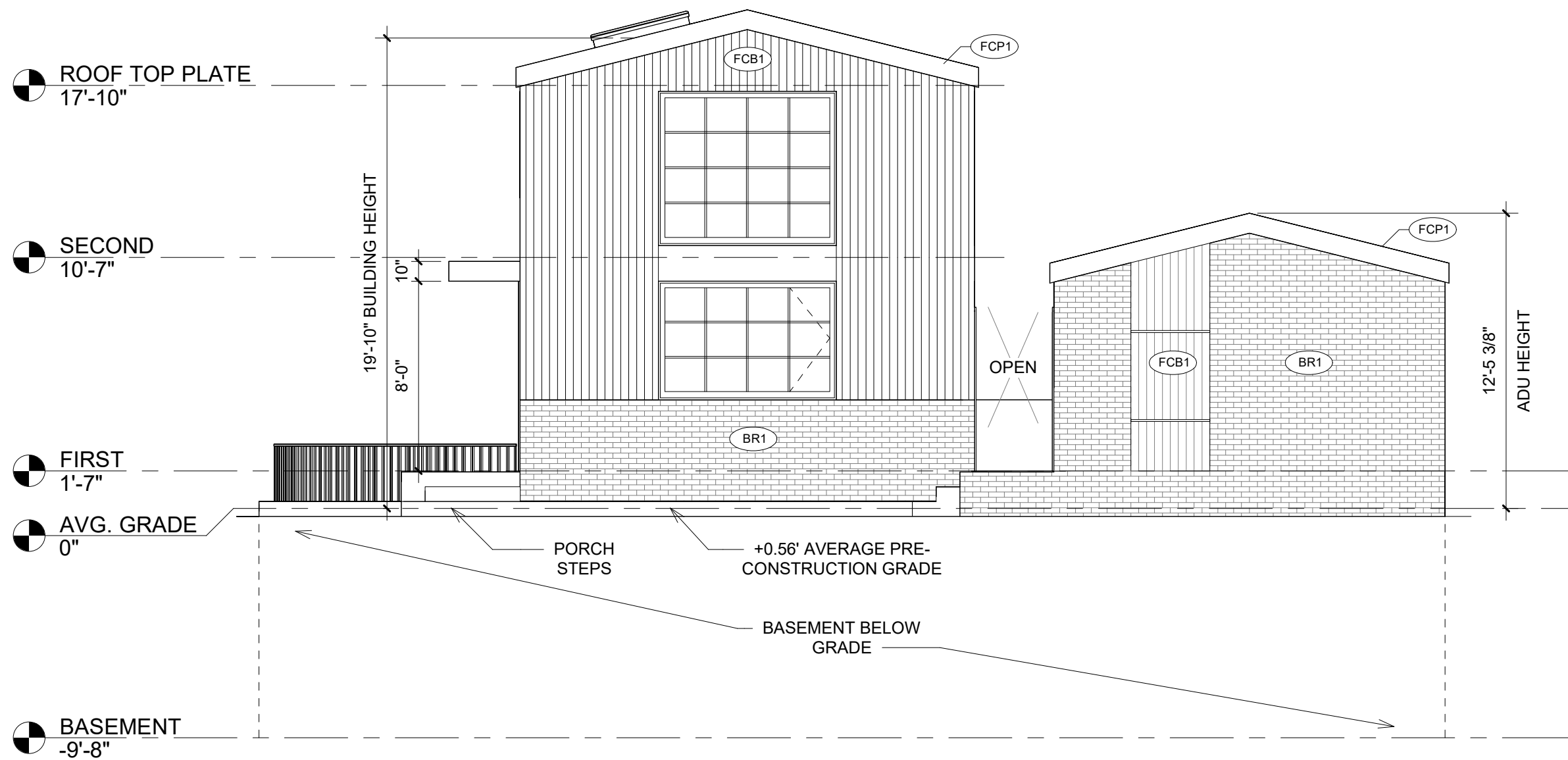
18

EUSTILUS architecture



GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

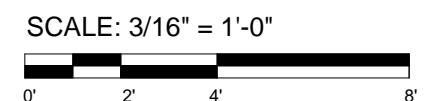
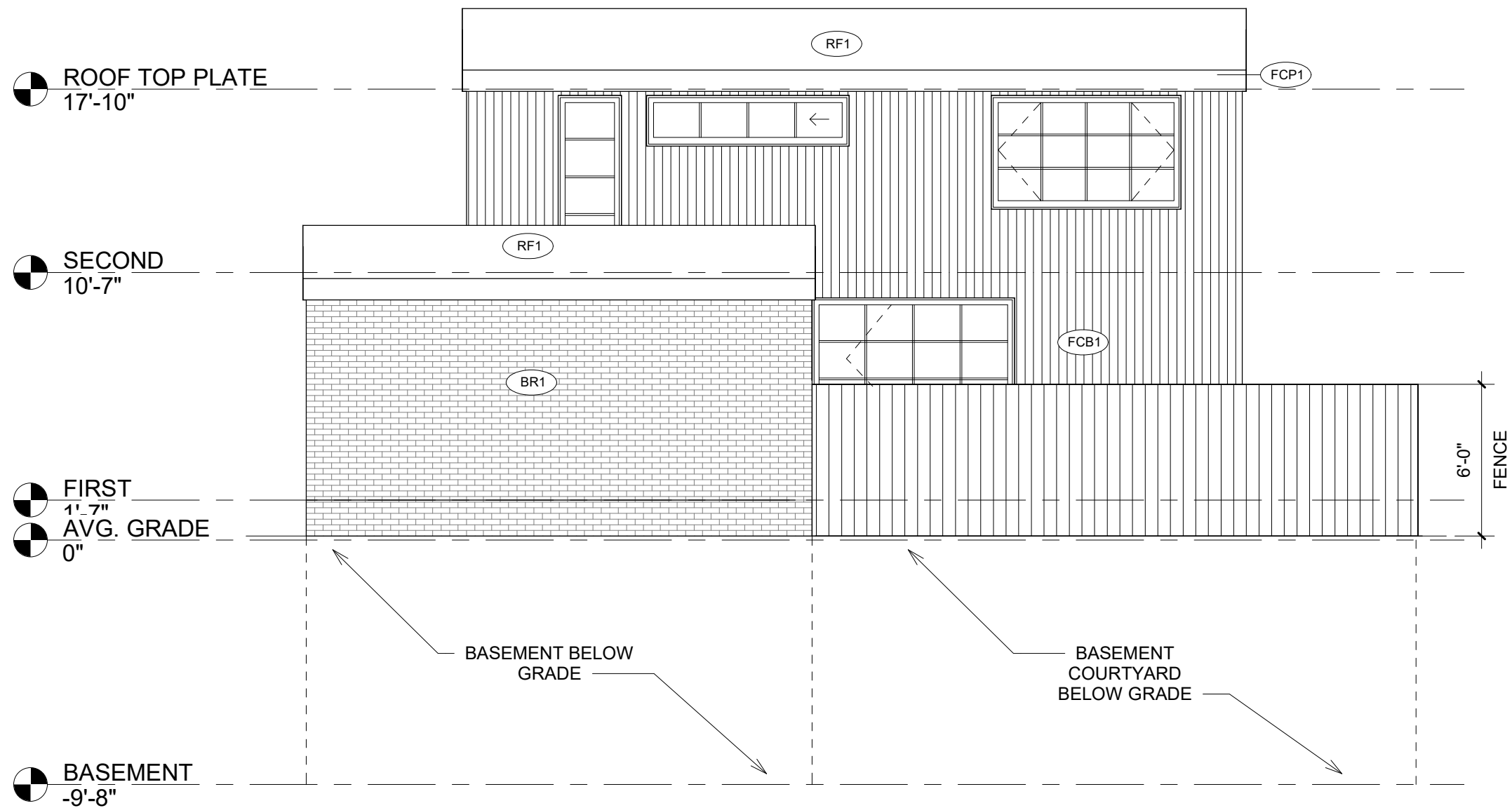
404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301



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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

ELEVATION - WEST | 20
 EUSTILUS architecture

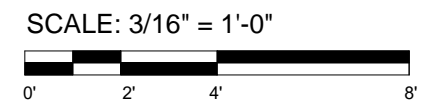
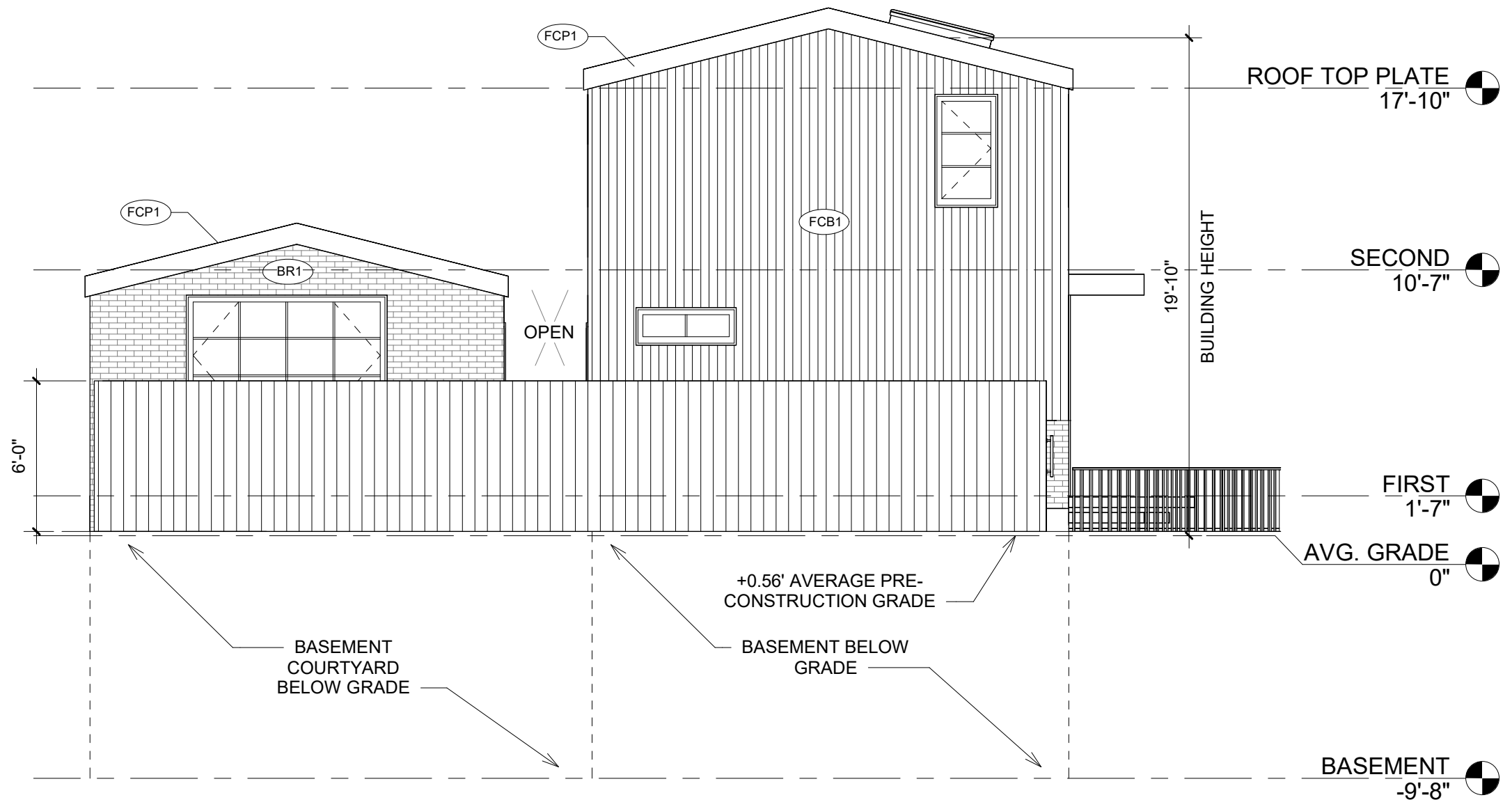


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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

ELEVATION - SOUTH | 21

EUSTILUS architecture

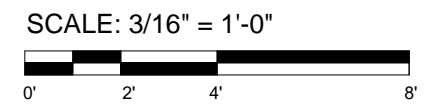
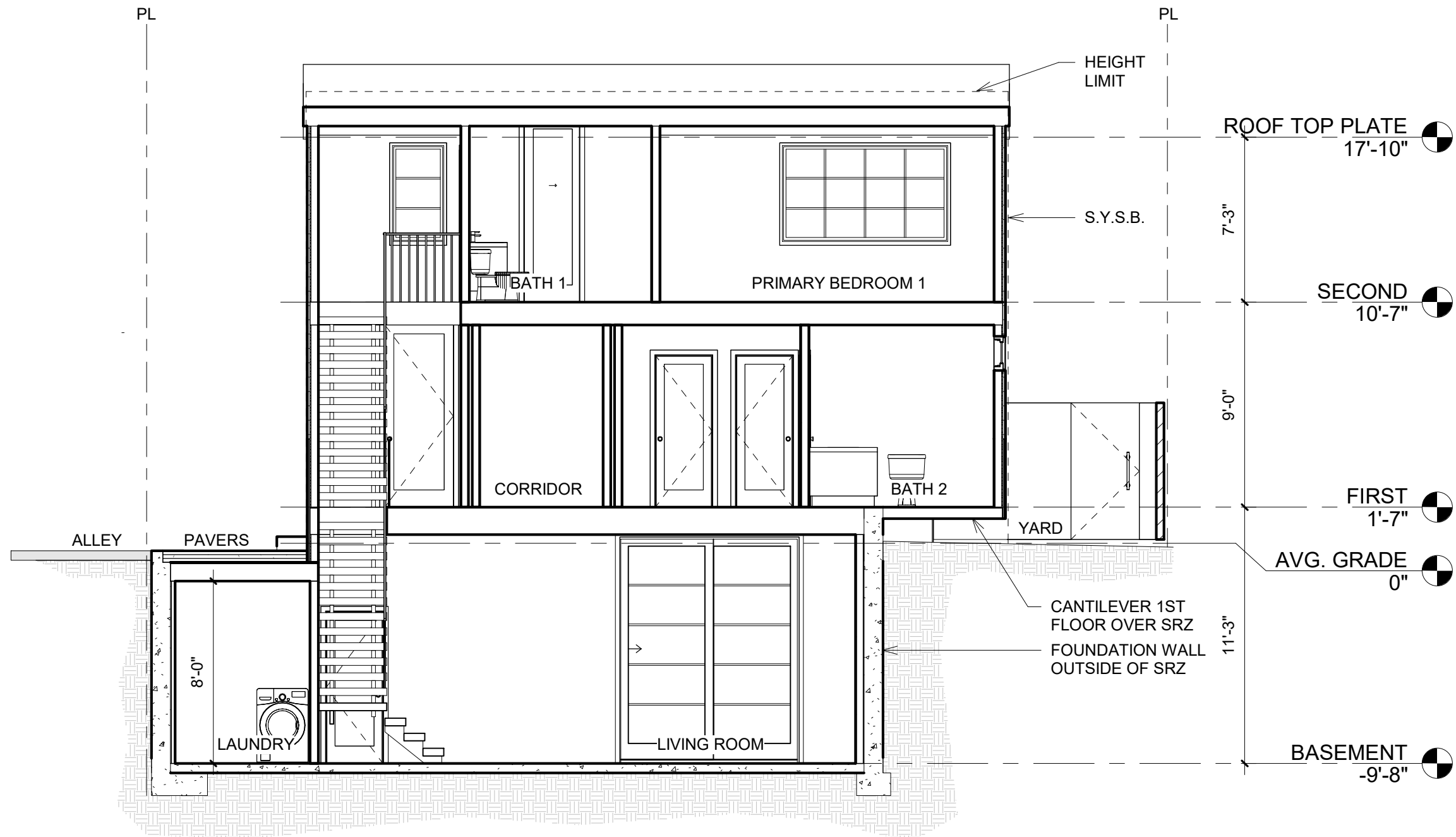


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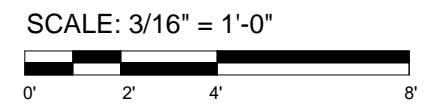
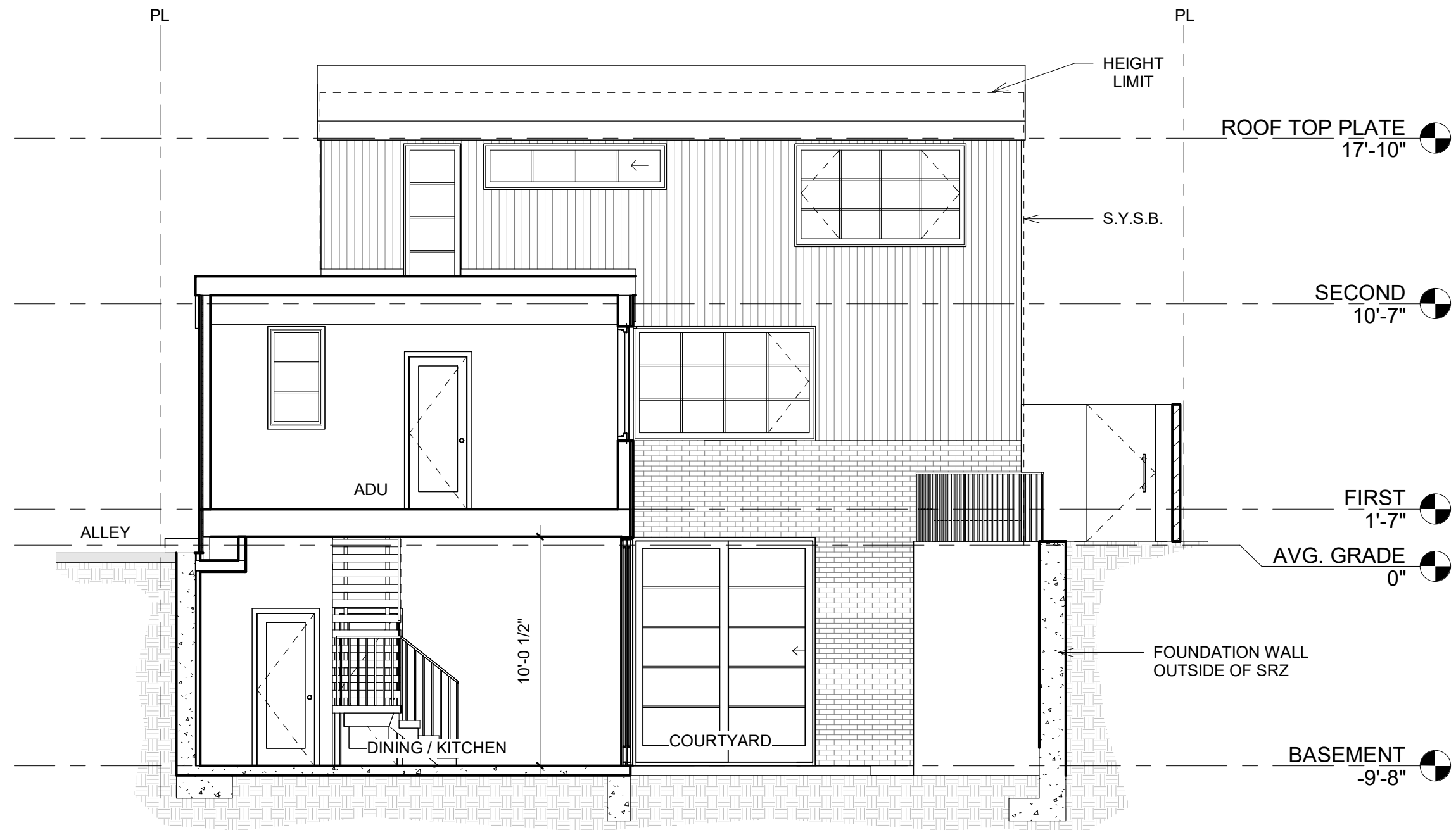
ELEVATION - EAST | 22

EUSTILUS architecture



GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE
 404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SECTION: EAST - WEST 01 | 23
 EUSTILUS architecture



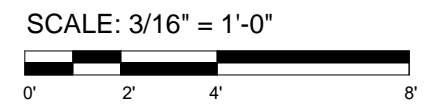
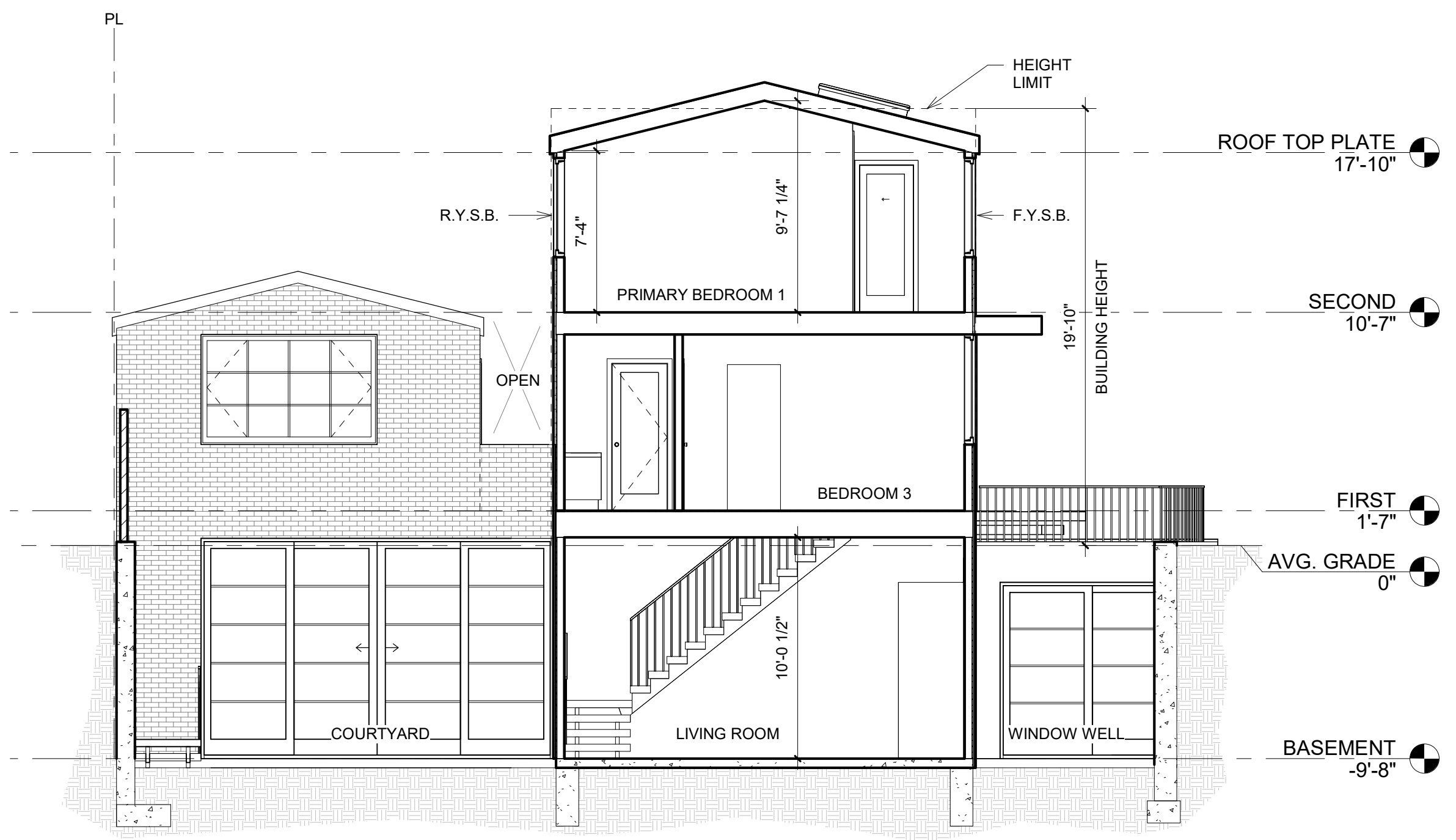
GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SECTION: EAST - WEST 02

24

EUSTILUS architecture

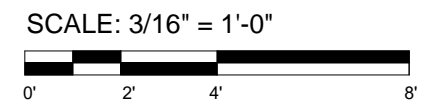
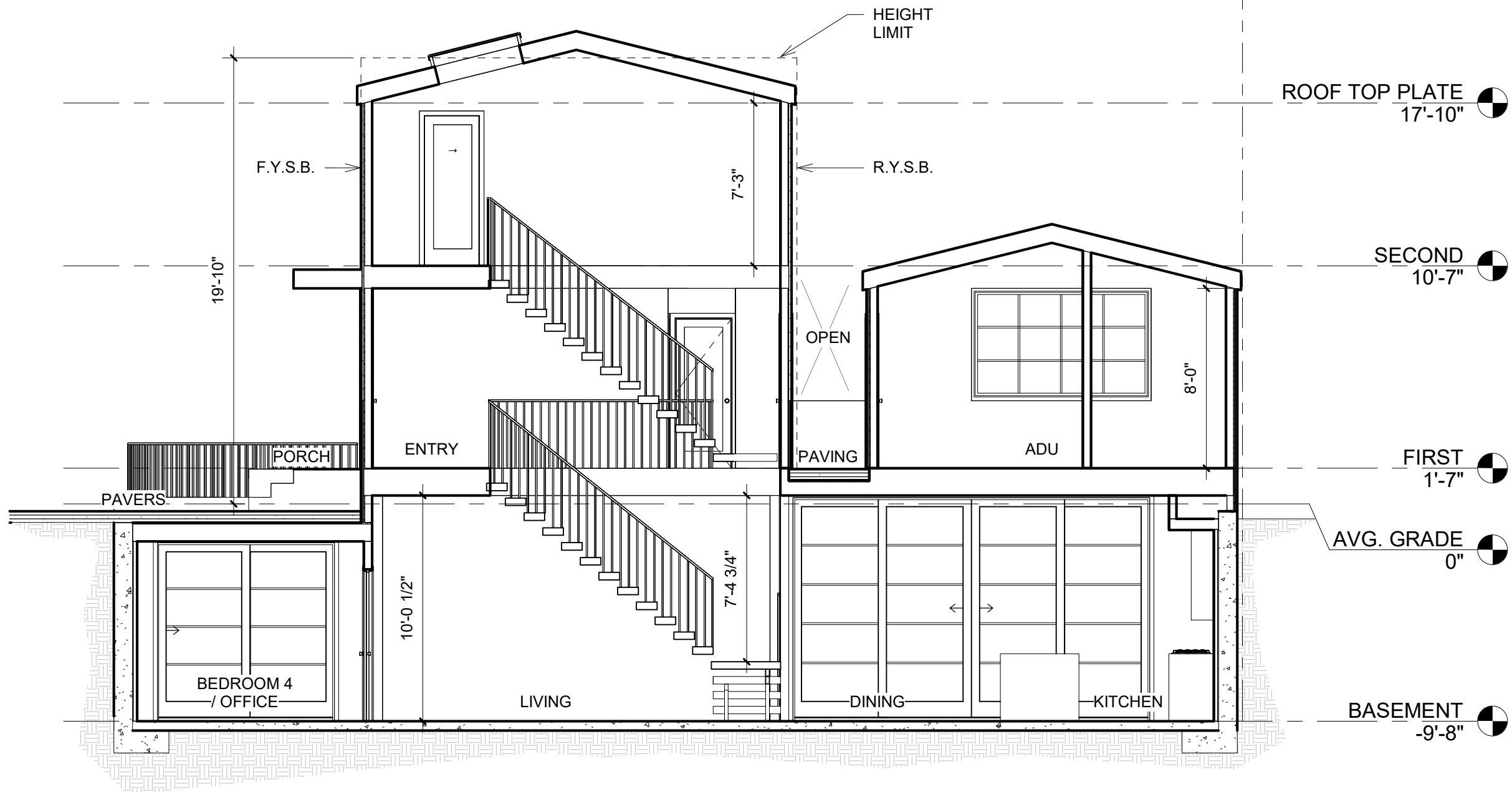


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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SECTION: NORTH - SOUTH 01

EUSTILUS architecture



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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

SECTION: NORTH - SOUTH 02

EUSTILUS architecture

26



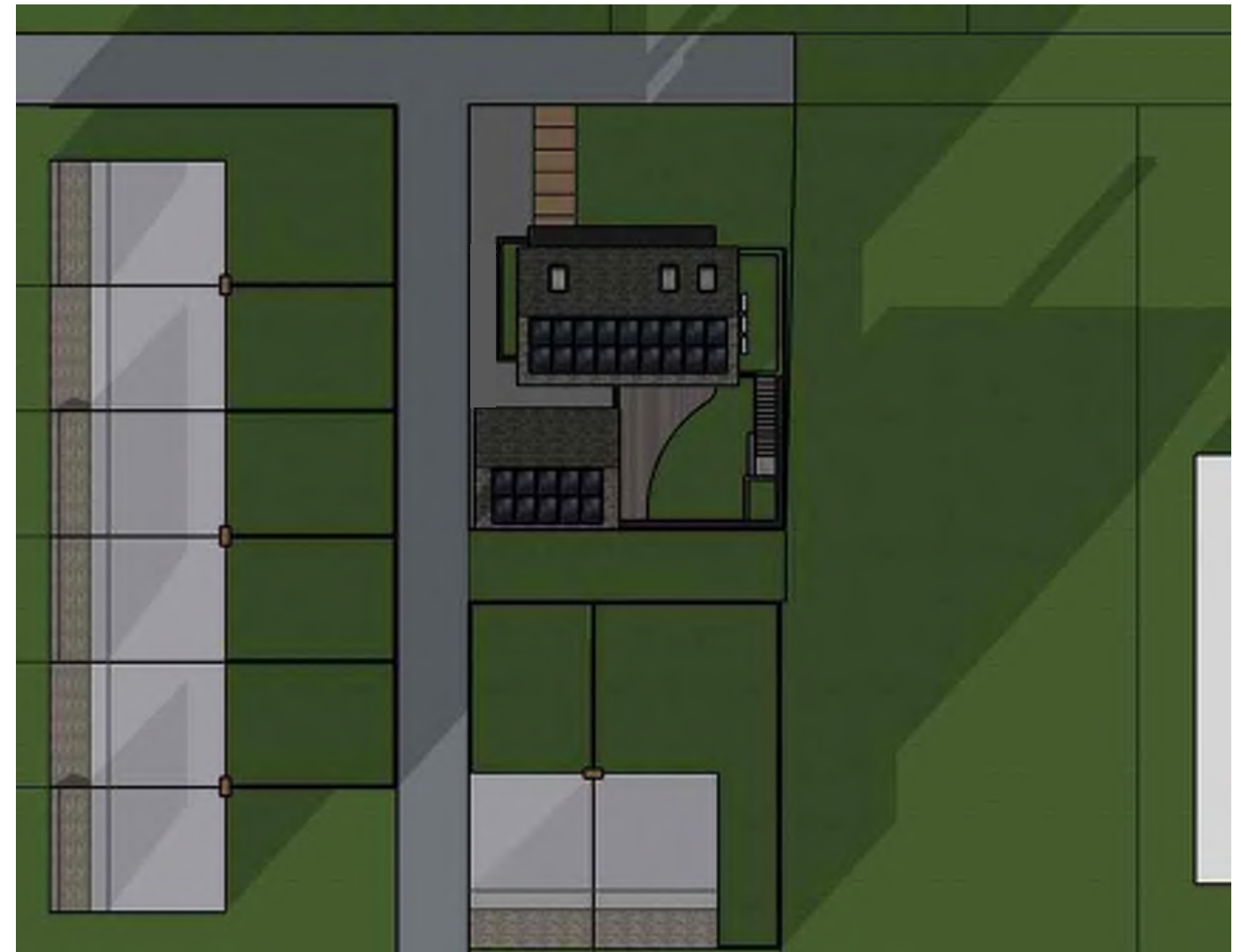
SUMMER SOLSTICE - 9:00 A.M.

WINTER SOLSTICE - 9:00 A.M.



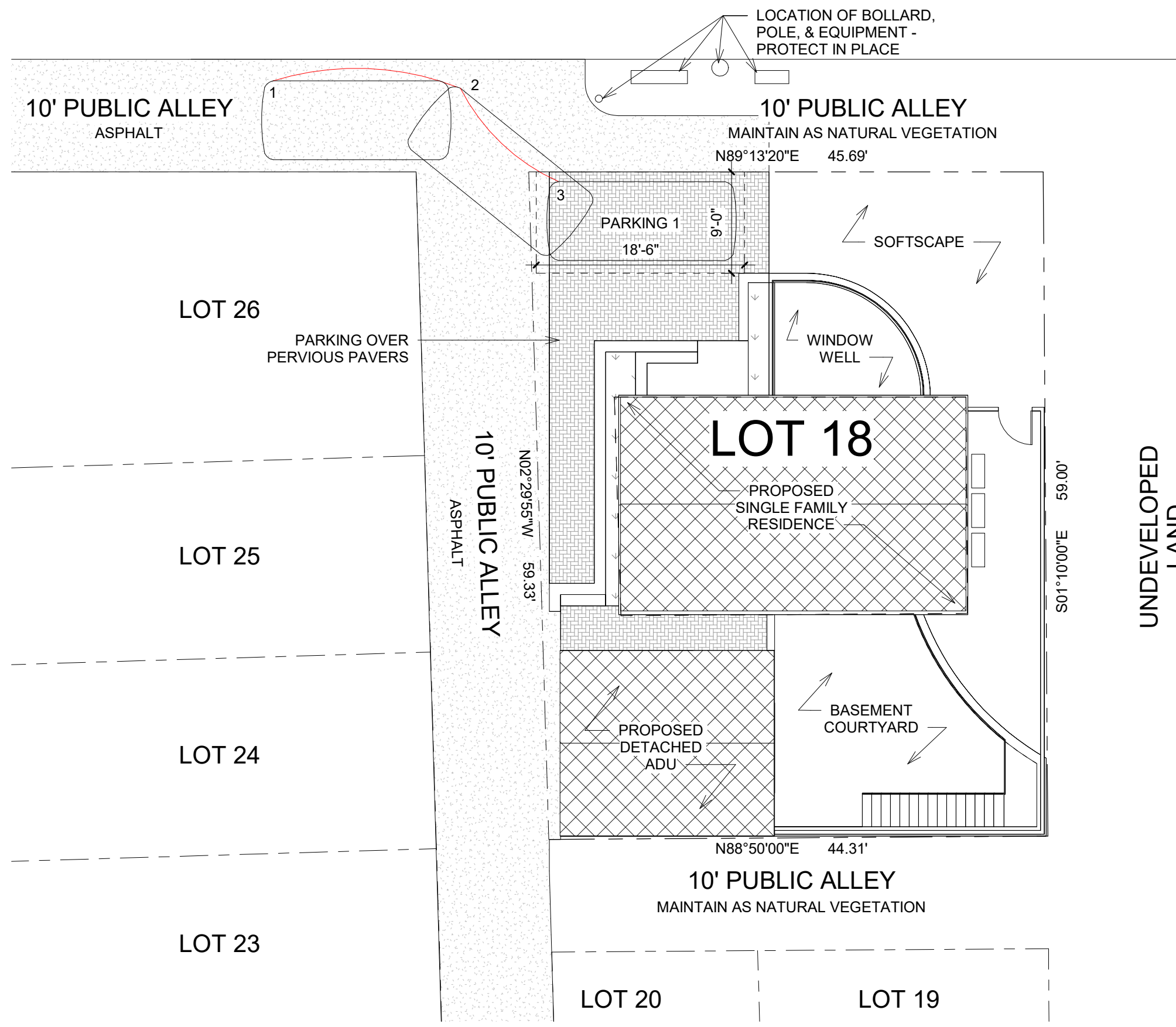
SUMMER SOLSTICE - 12:00 P.M.

WINTER SOLSTICE - 12:00 P.M.

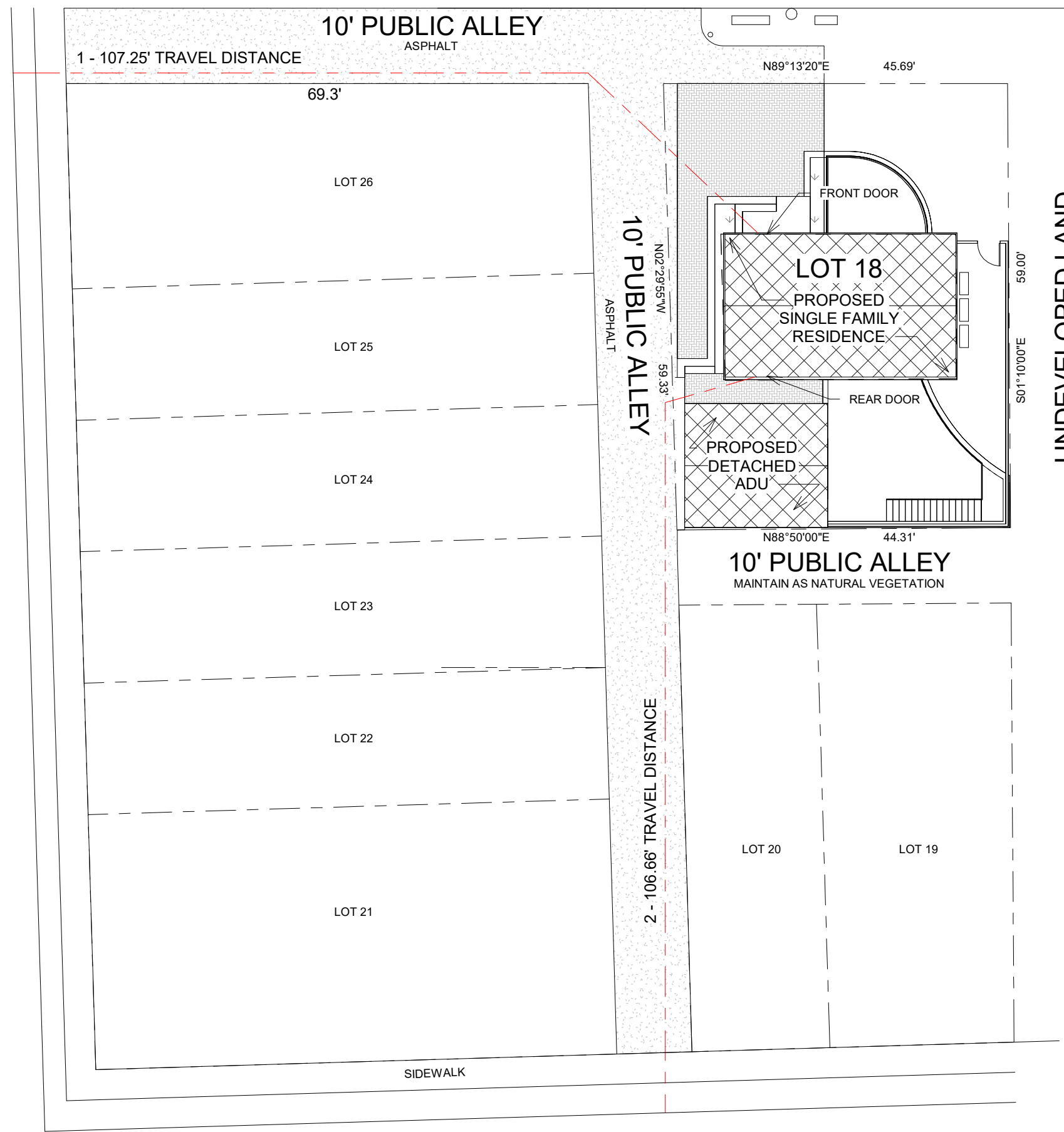


SUMMER SOLSTICE - 3:00 P.M.

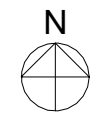
WINTER SOLSTICE - 3:00 P.M.



MT. VERNON AVE,



UNDEVELOPED LAND



SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

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404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

E. ALEXANDRIA AVE

FIRE ACCESS DIAGRAM

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EUSTILUS architecture

Becker Landscaping & Tree Service
10698 Moore Dr.
Manassas, Va. 20111
703-330-5204

Narrative of Tree Preservation
404 E. Alexandria Ave., Alexandria, Va.

1. All tree preservation activities shall be done according to the City Landscape Guidelines and meet current industry standards as specified by the International Society of Arboriculture and the American National Standards Institute.
2. Excavation and demolition shall occur. Prior to this tree protective fence shall be installed. Signs shall be placed every 50' indicating the tree protection areas. No activity, materials or equipment shall go beyond the tree protective fence which shall remain in place until completion of construction.
3. Root pruning will be performed for trees # 1N-5N along the TPF line. This will be a trench 18" deep without pulling or tearing the roots beyond the trench wall.
4. The canopy coverage requirements will be met through the planting of trees.
5. There are no invasive plants on this lot.
6. There are no "Heritage", "Specimen", "Memorial" or "Street" trees on this lot or neighboring lots.

Bill Becker

ISA Certified Arborist # MA – 0216A
 November 7, 2023

Tree List for 404 E. Alexandria., Alexandria, VA

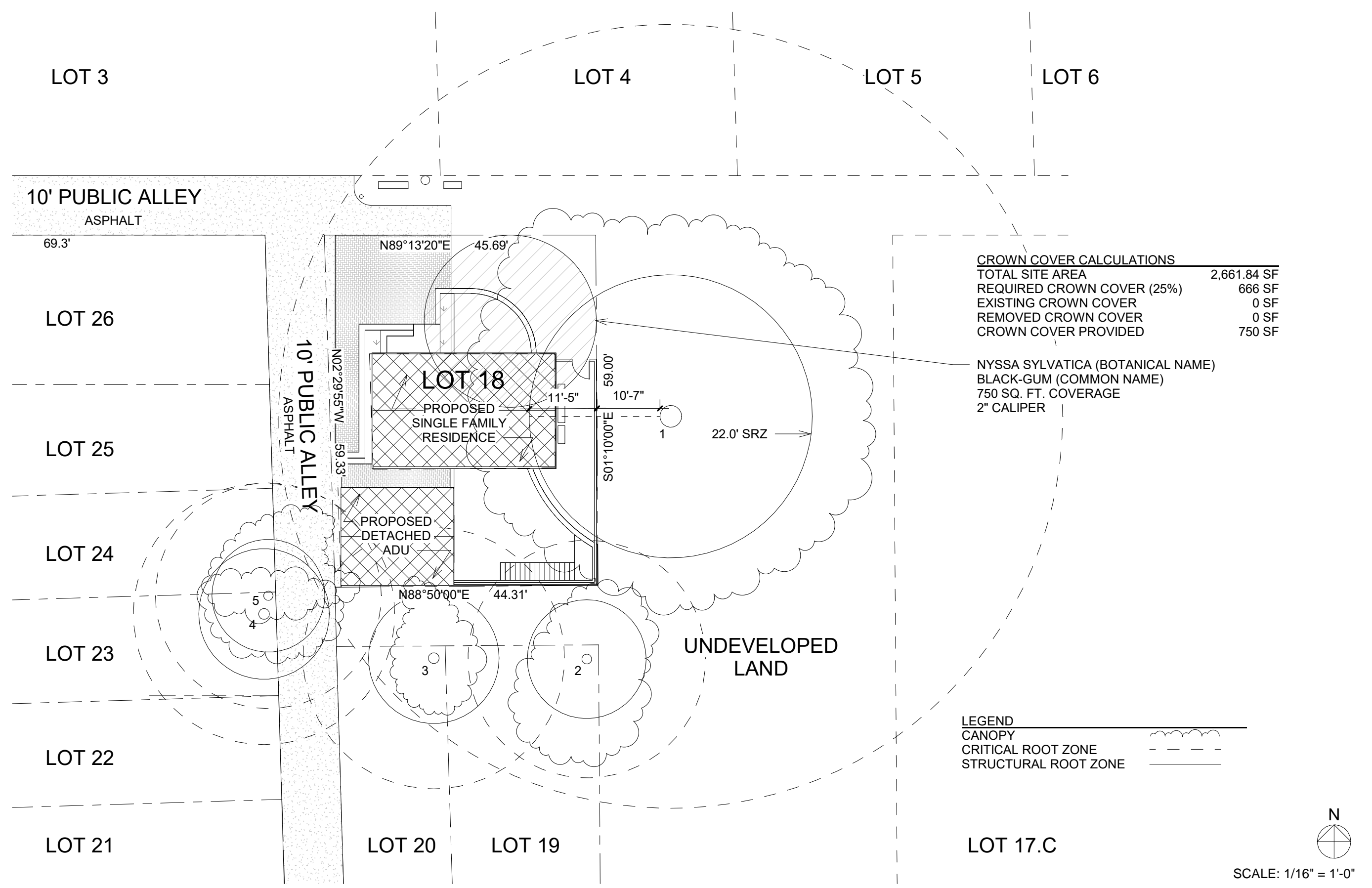
Prepared by Bill Becker, ISA Certified Arborist # MA-0216A November 7, 2023

Lot size = 2,662 s. f. requiring 666 s. f. tree canopy. Existing tree canopy = 0 s. f. Preserved tree canopy = 0 s. f.
 N denotes neighbor's tree. R denotes City Right of Way tree. J denotes jointly owned tree. * denotes not counted for credit.

Tree #	Common Name Botanical name	DBH Height	Health	Comments/Condition	Preservation Measures	Canopy Sq. Ft.
1N	Silver Maple Acer saccharinum	44"	55	Partially topped, cavity in trunk.	Save – install protective fence. Root prune along fence.	N/A
2N	Siberian Elm Ulmus pumila	20"	45	Topped.	Save – install protective fence. Root prune along fence.	N/A
3N	Northern Catalpa Catalpa speciosa	22"	85		Save – install protective fence. Root prune along fence.	N/A
4N	White Mulberry Morus alba	22"	25	Topped.	Save – install protective fence. Root prune along fence.	N/A
5N	Siberian Elm Ulmus pumila	8x4"	75	Declining.	Save – install protective fence. Root prune along fence.	N/A

LANDSCAPE NOTES

1. The property owner and/or applicant, specifier, contractor and installer of plant material are responsible for understanding and adhering to the standards set forth in the most recent version of the city of Alexandria Landscape Guidelines and applicable conditions of approval. All questions regarding application of, or adherence to, the standards and/or conditions of approval shall be directed to the city prior to commencement of demolition, construction, or any land disturbing activity.
2. The City-approved city-approved landscape plan submission, including plant schedule, notes and details shall be the document used for installation purposes and all procedures set forth in the landscape guidelines must be followed.
3. The contractor contractor shall not interfere with any tree protection measures or impact any existing vegetation identified to be preserved per the approved tree and vegetation protection plan.
4. Any changes, alterations or modifications to the site conditions that affect vegetation protection zones will require an amendment to the approved tree and vegetation protection plan and/or details.
5. Installation of plant material may only occur during the planting seasons identified in the landscape guidelines.
6. In lieu of more strenuous specifications, all landscape related work shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the current and most up-to-date edition (at time of construction) of Landscape Specification Guidelines as produced by the Landscape Contractors Association of Maryland, District of Columbia and Virginia; Gaithersburg, Maryland.
7. Substitutions to the approved plant material shall not occur until written approval is provided by the City..
8. Maintenance for this project shall be performed by the owner, applicant, successor(s) and/or assign(s) in perpetuity and in compliance with City of Alexandria Landscape Guidelines and as conditioned by project approval, as applicable.



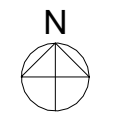
CROWN COVER CALCULATIONS

TOTAL SITE AREA	2,661.84 SF
REQUIRED CROWN COVER (25%)	666 SF
EXISTING CROWN COVER	0 SF
REMOVED CROWN COVER	0 SF
CROWN COVER PROVIDED	750 SF

NYSSA SYLVATICA (BOTANICAL NAME)
 BLACK-GUM (COMMON NAME)
 750 SQ. FT. COVERAGE
 2" CALIPER

LEGEND

CANOPY	
CRITICAL ROOT ZONE	
STRUCTURAL ROOT ZONE	



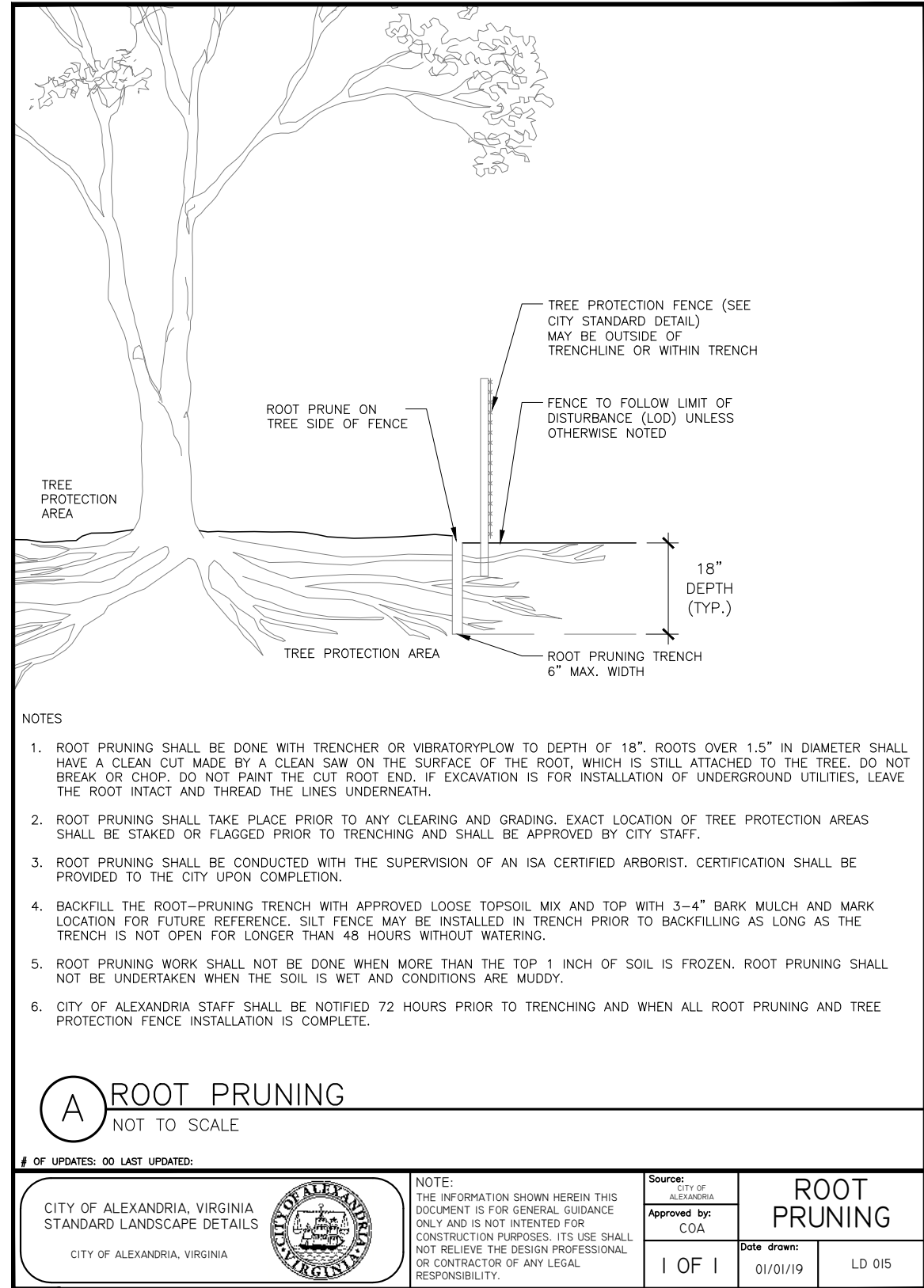
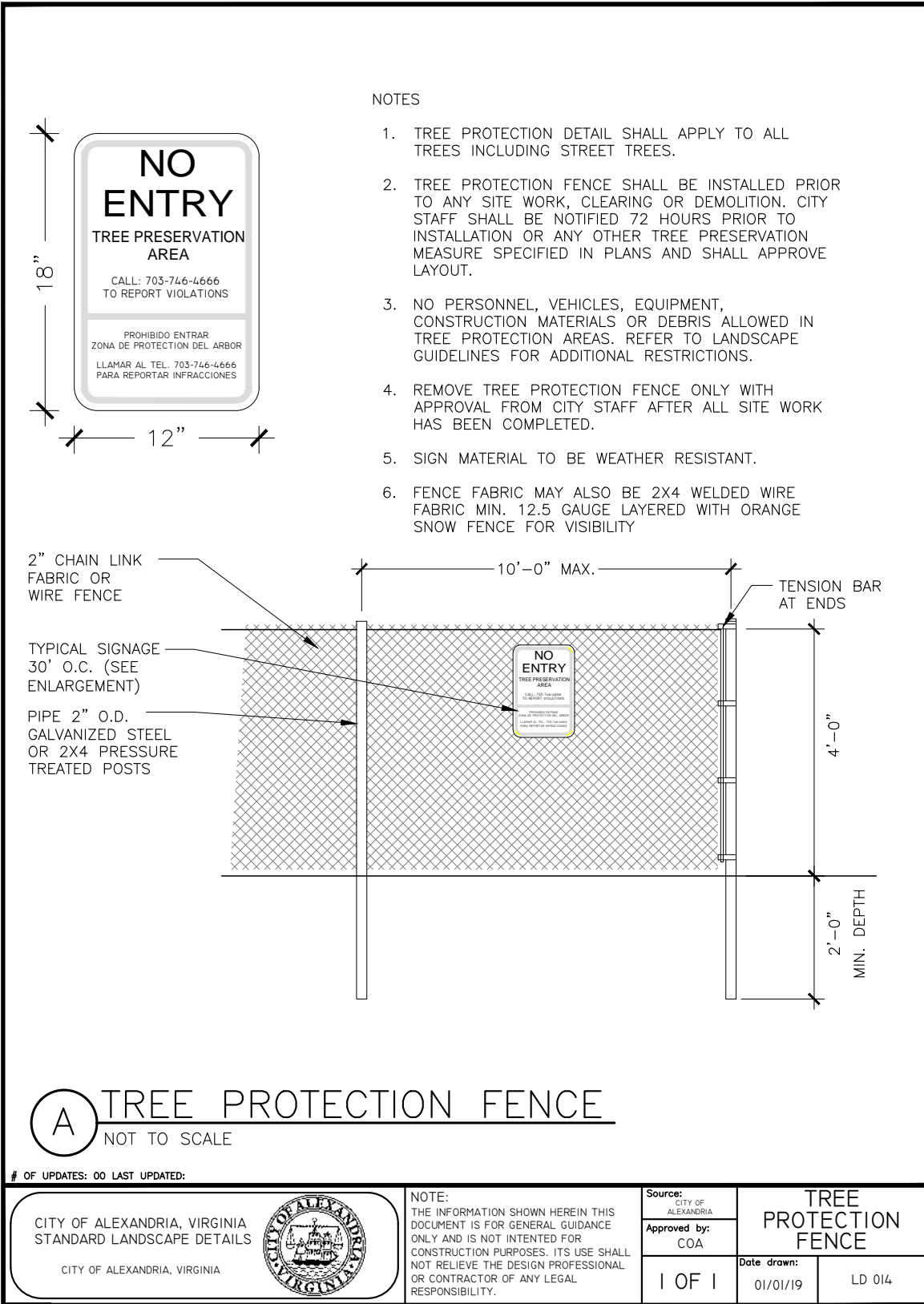
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GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

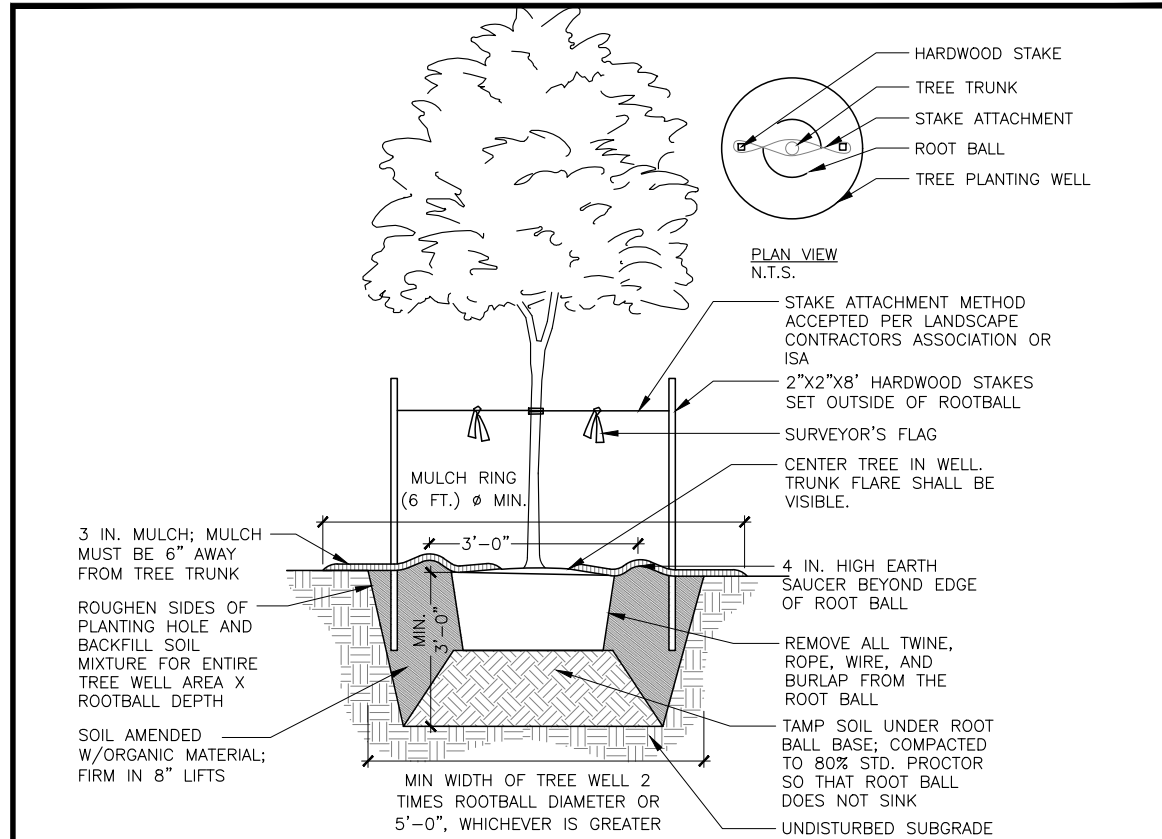
404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

LANDSCAPE PLAN

EUSTILUS architecture



SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"



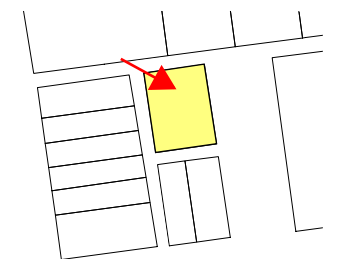
NOTES

1. AT PLANTING PRUNE ONLY CROSSING LIMBS, BROKEN OR DEAD BRANCHES, AND ANY BRANCHES THAT POSE A HAZARD TO PEDESTRIANS PER ANSI STANDARDS A300. DO NOT PRUNE INTO OLD WOOD ON EVERGREENS.
2. CONTRACTOR SHALL MAXIMIZE EXCAVATED AREA FOR TREE WELL WITHOUT ADVERSELY IMPACTING ADJACENT SITE FEATURES
4. UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED BY PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS OR CITY STAFF, SOIL MIXTURE SHALL BE CLEANED OF DEBRIS, AND MEET SOIL COMPOSITION REQUIREMENTS OF CITY OF ALEXANDRIA LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES.
5. TREES PLANTED WITHOUT THE TRUNK FLARE VISIBLE WILL BE REJECTED.
6. ALL PLANTS MUST BE WATERED AT INSTALLATION AND AGAIN WITHIN 48-HOURS OF INSTALLATION, ESTABLISHMENT WATERING SHALL BE PER THE SPECIFICATIONS ON ALL DETAILS.
7. STAKES WILL BE INSTALLED USING ARBORICULTURE PRACTICES, TREES SHALL STAND PLUM AFTER STAKING.
8. INSTALLATION WILL INCLUDE THE REMOVAL OF ALL STAKING MATERIAL ONE YEAR AFTER INSTALLATION. ANY HOLES LEFT BY REMOVING STAKING SHALL BE FILLED WITH APPROVED TOPSOIL / BACKFILL MIXTURE.
9. CONTRACTOR SHALL USE GALVANIZED EYESCREW & TURNBUCKLE INSTEAD OF ARBOR TIE ONLY FOR TREES OF SIGNIFICANT SIZE AS DIRECTED BY CITY STAFF.

A DECIDUOUS TREE PLANTING
NOT TO SCALE

OF UPDATES: 01 LAST UPDATED: 12/02/2019

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA STANDARD LANDSCAPE DETAILS CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA		NOTE: THE INFORMATION SHOWN HEREIN THIS DOCUMENT IS FOR GENERAL GUIDANCE ONLY AND IS NOT INTENDED FOR CONSTRUCTION PURPOSES. ITS USE SHALL NOT RELIEVE THE DESIGN PROFESSIONAL OR CONTRACTOR OF ANY LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY.	Source: CITY OF ALEXANDRIA	DECIDUOUS TREE PLANTING	
			Approved by: COA		
			1 OF 1	LD 001	

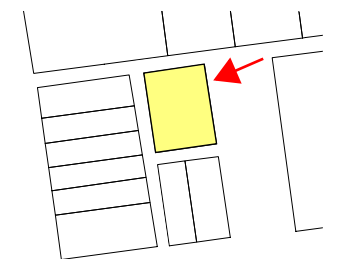


GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

VIEW OF FRONT AND SIDE FACADES

EUSTILUS architecture

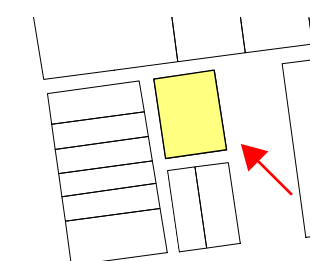


GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

VIEW FROM UNDEVELOPED LAND LOOKING AT EAST FACADE

EUSTILUS architecture

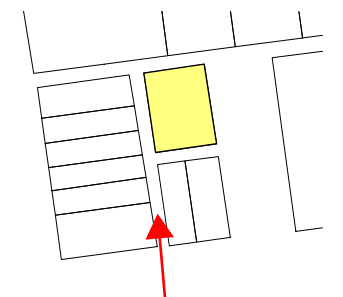


GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

VIEW FROM UNDEVELOPED LAND ALONG E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.

EUSTILUS architecture



GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

VIEW FROM MT. VERNON AVE. ALLEY ENTRY

EUSTILUS architecture



GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

CANTILEVER OVER SRZ
EUSTILUS architecture

40

THE ORIENTATION OF THE HOUSE IS EAST TO WEST WHICH IS THE SAME DIRECTION FOR THE HOMES ALONG MT. VERNON AVE.

DIVIDED LITES ARE A COMMON FEATURES IN WINDOWS THROUGHUOT DEL REY.

THE MAJORITY OF DEL REY HOMES HAVE PORCHES OR AWNINGS OVER THEIR FRONT DOORS. THIS CANTILEVER ROOF COMPLEMENTS THIS FEATURE.

THE MAJORITY OF DEL REY HOMES HAVE STEPS LEADING TO THE FRONT DOOR

THE GABLE ROOF IS A DOMINANT FEATURE FOR THE HOMES ALONG E. ALEXANDRIA AVE. THE ROOF HEIGHT IS LOWER THAN ALL ADJACENT HOME TO MINIMIZE THE SIZE OF THE STRUCTURE.

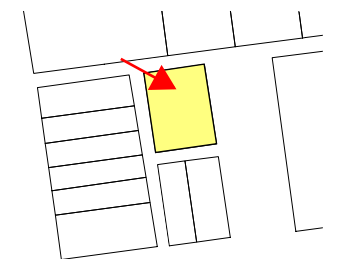
THE GABLE ROOF ALLOWS FOR SOLAR PANELS TO BE INSTALLED ON THE SOUTH FACING ROOF OF THE MAIN HOUSE AND ADU.

THE EIGHT ADJACENT HOMES ALONG MOUNT VERNON AVE. ARE ALL NARROW WITH A SIMILAR WIDTH.

THE FIBER CEMENT SIDING COMPLEMENTS THE HOMES ALONG E. ALEXANDRIA AVE.

THE BRICK SIDING COMPLEMENTS THE HOMES ALONG MOUNT VERNON AVE

PERVIOUS PAVERS ALLOW FOR WATER FILTRATION TO NATIVE SOIL



GROSS - TERAN RESIDENCE

404A E. ALEXANDRIA AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301

MATERIAL COMPATIBILITY

EUSTILUS architecture

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: MD Lim <markdlim@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 7:43 PM
To: Amy Jackson; Justin Wilson
Cc: John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]2/24 Council Public Hearing: Opposition to SUP 2023-00076 (404A E. Alexandria Ave)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from markdlim@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor Justin Wilson, Vice Mayor Amy Jackson, and Honorable Members of the City Council for the City of Alexandria,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my recommendation to reject the Special Use Permit #2023-00076 that will be discussed as item #12 on the docket for City Council's Public Hearing on February 24, 2024. I submitted my written testimony via the City Council portal on Alexendrava.gov and pasted it below, welcoming any opportunity to share my perspective or answer any questions.

Respectfully,
Mark
1407 Mount Vernon Avenue

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your leadership representing the interests of our community. As the final check-and-balance to a process that seems to be steam-rolled by City Staff and the Applicant, I ask you to reject the Special Use Permit application #2023-00076 at the City Council hearing on February 24, 2024, as Docket # 24-1854. Below my signature is my written testimony for the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024. Rather than repeat that letter, I wanted to further share why I recommend that you consider rejecting this application.

My residence will be directly impacted if this substandard lot is developed as designed in the application. The lack of community engagement and disregard for community opinion by the Applicant and Department of Planning and Zoning Staff remains appalling. Those affected by this application remain united in opposition, as shown by: Mayor Wilson's comments at the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024 (quoted below); an Alexandria Times article calling this a "contentious issue" on January 17, 2024; a split 4-3 vote by the Planning Commission on January 4, 2023; and formal opposition by the Del Ray Citizen's Association sent to the Department of Planning and Zoning on November 20, 2023. Amongst this public opposition and contention, the Applicant and Staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning have not offered a forum for discussion or resolution.

None of the letters supporting this application were authored by affected neighbors, except for one who welcomed "new neighbors in our immediate area and the diversity in housing". As the applicant responded to Planning Commissioner Koenig's question on January 4, 2024 (4 hrs : 9 mins) "Ideally our plan would be to rent it long term, year lease" without mention in the application or subsequent reports that this development would be rented at below-market rates. This property is not an example of Zoning For Housing, a vision of which I'm supportive as the City continues to grow. But, that vision is disingenuously applied in this letter of support and by the Staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning who justified their recommendation against the opposition of Del Ray Citizen's Association at the Planning Commission Public Hearing. Zoning for Housing should include sincere engagement of the community and the steam-rolling to advance this specific application is an example of what not to do.

As Mayor Wilson said at the City Council's Public Hearing (2 hrs : 56 mins), "There has been considerable disagreement between the applicant and residents...let me encourage the applicant and the neighbors to get together...and have some conversation about the areas of disagreement and see what possible could be agreed to." My neighbors who would be negatively impacted if this permit is approved represent different interests in this City's growth. However, this lack of engagement by the Department of Planning and Zoning staff and Applicant has brought us together to learn and share what is happening at 404-A E. Alexandria Avenue. It was through these forums that I learned: a) about the application and potential impact to my residence (only one paper sign was posted in a non-obvious location on E. Alexandria Avenue, a sign that has been missing for weeks), b) that some neighbors reached out to the Department of Planning and Zoning and not received a response, and c) that not all impacted neighbors received an invitation to the one-and-only introduction by the Applicant in November 2023. This meant that we had to quickly learn about the utility of a Special Use Permit and the review process, search historical public records of our residence and community, and provide testimonies to Del Ray Citizen's Association, Planning Commission, and City Council. Beyond those forums and particularly given the public perception of this issue, the applicant and/or staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning had multiple opportunities and ample time to do outreach but failed to do so. Instead, we learn about updates on the Staff Report through formal reports submitted to dockets of the City Council Public Hearings.

The Applicant and the City Staff have not reached out to me, even though my email address is publicly available as written testimony. Another missed opportunity was at the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024, where about 20 of us planned to provide verbal testimony or support. Upon learning about the delay, we all met in the overflow room to discuss next steps. The Applicant entered the room, saw all of us and instead of joining the discussion, left the room to consult with Mr. Sam Shelby of the Department of Planning and Zoning who waited in the hallway. The door to the overflow room is glass and we were at the entrance, so they could not have missed us as I clearly saw them in discussion. But, both left without saying a word, missing an opportunity for transparent discussion and furthering concerns that City Staff sides with the Applicant and are not interested in talking with us.

Instead, Planning Director Mr. Karl E. Moritz reached out to two neighbors by email on Friday, February 16, 2024, at 5:19 p.m. EST, asking to meet. This outreach, one week prior to the City Council Public Hearing, three weeks after Mayor Wilson's recommendation, and after 5pm on the Friday before a three-day weekend, can be seen as nothing but devious. I did not receive this invitation. Fortunately, we developed an email list among affected neighbors after the City Council meeting, with many of us changing our Saturday plans to meet with Mr. Moritz and Mr. Shelby with less than 24 hours notice. When I asked Mr. Moritz why I wasn't invited to the discussion, he said that he didn't have my email address (I had to remind him about the written testimony) and that he was planning on going door-to-door. Their unannounced door-to-door campaign on the Saturday of a three-day weekend would have occurred *after* meeting my neighbors. None of this makes practical sense and furthers speculation that this was a last-minute and insincere attempt to "check the box" on engaging the community a week before the postponed Public Hearing.

As mentioned in my original testimony, I remain concerned about the increased underground flooding to my basement and the increased risk to pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic on Mount Vernon Avenue. At the impromptu Saturday meeting, Mr. Moritz and Mr. Shelby did not provide comment on the flooding potential and seemed to agree with the poor visibility of cross pedestrian and vehicular traffic after we walked down the alley, acknowledging that this may be the only alley on Mt Vernon Avenue that is in-the-middle of a block. Given their lack of engagement, I was still disappointed that neither were prepared to answer those concerns, even though it was raised in several written testimonies submitted by myself and others.

Again, thank you for your leadership and opportunity to provide my comments in advance of the discussion on February 24, 2024. Please do not hesitate to email me at markdlim@gmail.com if you have any questions about the content of this testimony, the one submitted for the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024 (pasted below), or would like to discuss my frustration on the lack of engagement by the Applicant and staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (and Yashin Lin)
1407 Mount Vernon Avenue

Previous written testimony sent to City Council Members for January 20, 2024 hearing

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your continued service representing the best interests of our community. Change is not easy, particularly for a city with extensive historical roots, and as you steer our City through Northern Virginia's growth, I remain proud of your leadership in ensuring that Alexandria maintains a healthy and inclusive community.

The health of our community has embodied a personal obligation to contribute through community service. To date, I have volunteered over 400 hours to the Alexandria Health Department's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team. This includes weekends supporting and supervising: annual mass influenza vaccination events, several COVID-19 mass testing events, large COVID-19 vaccine clinics that immunized over a thousand community members to smaller clinics in neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic, and pediatric vaccine clinics. I also volunteered at the Health Department's COVID-19 call center and as a COVID-19 contract tracer and case investigator. These opportunities gave me a unique opportunity to cross paths with other Alexandrians from different walks of life, and I have left every event prouder of being a resident of this City.

However, I am writing to express my disappointment at the lack of community engagement or consideration by the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Alexandria Planning Commission on the application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Avenue. I only learned about changes in the original application through public filings of the final document, interpreting these documents as a non-subject matter expert with other impacted neighbors, and attending the Planning Commission meeting on January 4, 2024. Beyond these filings and forum, we were never given an opportunity to learn about changes, exchange concerns, or explore alternatives with the City Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant, even though my residence and those of my neighbors would be negatively affected by this new single-family residence with a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit.

This lengthy letter seems to be the last opportunity for community-level input. The first and only opportunity for dialogue was hosted by the Del Ray Citizen Association (DRCA), which did its job in allowing for deliberation and voting in opposition to this SUP (re. letter sent to Mr. Moritz, Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning). But, instead of following up with DRCA's letter and those of my neighbors, the Department of Planning and Zoning responded through a final report that recommended approval of the SUP permit. Not only did their official report not address the significant concerns in those letters, it only raised more questions. We only wished for dialogue and the Planning and Zoning Staff didn't respond to our requests. Adding to the sting was that we first learned about adaptations at the Planning Commission meeting, after the Staff filed their report and recommendations.

I am in full agreement with my neighbor's and DRCA's concerns and since there is no other opportunity for dialogue with the Planning and Zoning Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant. I am presenting my main concerns through this letter and hopefully as verbal testimony to you, as our City Council.

- Firstly, our residences are part of the Hooffs Run Watershed that sit on-top of underground streams that drain into the very-active Hooffs Run. Most of the recent flooding events, specifically those off Monroe Avenue and off Commonwealth Avenue in the Rosemont Neighborhood, are associated with our watershed. The streams immediately underneath and surrounding our residences have not been disturbed since our multi-unit townhomes were built in the late 1930's with sump pumps being a necessity. My sump pump routinely runs multiple times during dry periods and almost continuously during rain and snow events. It also takes several days for the large "puddles" on the 404A E Alexandria lot to absorb into the ground after a modest rain event, confirming that the soil is already water-logged by active streams with little capacity for additional run-off. Building a solid structure that runs to the edge of the lot with a predominantly underground footprint will stress these active sub-terrain streams. Since our townhomes are below 404A E Alexandria, it is highly likely that the streams will be diverted and focused into our basements if the proposed building is constructed. My own sump pump is unlikely to handle increased demand and I would predict that putting in a single-family home at 404A E

Alexandria could make the surrounding ten homes unlivable given their age and cost for reinforced infrastructure.

- Secondly, the only vehicular access to the proposed unit is through a small public alley off Mount Vernon Avenue. Approving this permit will increase the danger to our immediate community by converting a lightly-used alleyway into an active vehicular thoroughfare. Driving onto Mount Vernon Avenue from this alley means that the driver must first cross an active sidewalk connecting the Braddock Road Metro Station, GW Middle School, and the rest of Alexandria to Del Ray's "downtown" core. Then, the driver must carefully navigate onto Mount Vernon Avenue after passing parked cars at the edge of the alley entrance, with additional effort that car and bicycle cross-traffic is aware given that the entrance is not obvious (as it is in the middle of the block) or visible from the street. There have been several occasions of cars blocking the alley because visitors thought it was a viable parking spot. The City's refuse, recycling, and compost collection staff also will not attempt to drive down the alley and instead service our townhomes by parking on Alexandria Avenue and walking down the alley. The detached Accessory Dwelling Unit described in the SUP application has its own dedicated kitchen and laundry in addition to those within the main building, elevating concern that the proposed construction is for two separately-resided buildings. This alley and its intersection with the sidewalk and Mount Vernon Avenue is not designed for the likely increased traffic pressure introduced by two new family units at 404A E Alexandria and regular services such as Amazon or other delivery providers.
- Most shockingly, during verbal testimony provided by the staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning at the Planning Commission meeting, one significant justification for their final recommendation was based on the proposed goals of Zoning For Housing/Housing For All (ZFH). My love of the diversity and inclusivity of this City should show that I am in full support of ZFH and I applaud the Council's leadership on this issue. However, the residence described in the application for this SUP does not address the vision as it is proposed as a single-family residence (although this counters the design, as mentioned above) that the applicant testified is intended to be a rental. If these are rented, I highly doubt these will be offered at sub-market rental rates as this is not described anywhere. The intended use and design of these buildings are not the model that should represent the vision of ZFH and it is insincere to make that claim. I remain disappointed that these City Staff wanted to distract the lack of substance in their report by politicizing an issue unrelated to this SUP application.

Our family focused our housing search on Alexandria when we were moving back to this region after several years in Seattle. After living in eight different cities, Alexandria is the only city I have ever wanted to put down roots, a commitment that resulted in the purchase of our first home. The past five years have been nothing but amazing, including new routines of weekend walks throughout Alexandria's diverse neighborhoods, enjoying the multitude of cuisines from Old Town and Arlandria to the West End, and partaking in multiple events, festivals, farmer's markets, and local theater. We typically find ourselves comparing Alexandria during our vacations, often to the detriment of the cities we're visiting.

As you review this SUP application and my comments, I also ask the City Council to recognize that this review process lacked transparency and community engagement, with concerns filed by my neighbors and DRCA remaining unaddressed. This process has been disappointingly frustrating, and I am speaking as a resident who loves Alexandria and the community represented by its residents and dedicated civil servants.

Again, thanks for this opportunity to voice my concerns. I welcome a call, email, or opportunity to meet if you have any questions about the content of this letter or want to learn more about my concerns about this application or the lack of transparency and engagement in its review.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (with Yashin Lin)
1407 Mt Vernon Ave

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Ann Kammerer <ann.kod@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 9:49 PM
To: Justin Wilson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Amy Jackson; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP at 404A E Alexandria Ave. in Del Ray

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ann.kod@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear City Council

I'm writing to express my opposition to the SUP application for development at 404a E. Alexandria Ave in Del Ray.

I've lived at 1403 Mt Vernon Ave, a nearly adjacent property to the one in question, since 1998. The plans for the structure feel very out of keeping with the rest of the surrounding neighborhood. The developers have indicated that they don't intend to live on the property. The lack of street frontage, safety concerns regarding fire service access, and past flooding issues all weigh on my feelings about the project. The proposed house and the ADU, which would be used for short term rental, do not address the tight parking issues in the area, and again, are not in keeping with the neighborhood feel.

I hope that you will oppose granting this project.

Ann Kammerer
1403 Mt Vernon Ave
Alexandria VA 22301

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Good Evening City Council Members,

My name is John Burdick and I live with my wife, Dakota Chance, and our two sons at 1409 Mount Vernon Ave. We bought our home in June 2022 using the VA Loan benefit afforded to us as Active Duty Military. Our house represents the single largest slice of our financial portfolio and up until recently, we had hoped it would serve as our retirement home after our children had grown up and flown the coop. However, today I am writing to add my voice to the Del Ray Land Use Committee, Del Ray Citizen Association, and the numerous residents who have already spoken up in opposition to the Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 with the proposed construction of [404A E Alexandria Avenue](#). A project that if allowed to proceed in its present configuration, would cause undue financial harm to the surrounding neighbors and would force my wife and I to reconsider hanging up our uniforms here in the City of Del Ray.

“The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community ... is to prevent harm to others.”

- John Stuart Mill

I have read the City Council’s Six Priorities and commend you on the scope and ambition of your many initiatives: in particular, the Council’s work on Z4H/H4A. While I understand this SUP is not being applied for under these new zoning rules, I fear the City Staff has used these altruistic initiatives as a vehicle to pass something resembling its merits, but upon closer inspection, bears none of its hallmark benefits namely affordability, access, and safety. 404A E Alexandria represents the very thing opponents of Z4H/H4A feared most i.e., Housing for the Sake of Housing (H4H); Projects that erect valuable buildings for a select few without building value for the surrounding area. If one simply looks at parametric cost estimation ($\$390 \times 2,700\text{sft} = \1M) and adds to it the costly logistical hurdles that stand in the way of construction, the proposed property would be just one more unaffordable home that benefits the builder at the expense of his/her neighbors. With its current design, the City would have to waive R-2-5 Zone lot-size minimums, block-face study, ADU zoning regulations, fire safety standards, street frontage requirements as well as ignore the glaring incompatibility to the surrounding homes.

I am in full support of capital enterprises and respect the builder’s financial endeavors to add another investment to their property portfolio. If this were a build-by-right or even a more reasonable lot with street frontage, I would most likely support the project. However, in the case of this SUP, where so many special permissions are being asked and so many common-sense zoning codes

waived, some for the first time, there is a compulsory need to scrutinize the pro(s) against an ever-growing list of cons. It is here where I would like to add, for the Council's deliberation, several key elements I believe tip the scale in favor of denying the SUP.

1. **SETS DANGEROUS FUTURE PRECEDENCE:** It is a fact that if this SUP is granted and the project allowed to continue, it will inevitably run aground with the glaring logistical concerns raised during the Planning and Zoning hearing e.g., staging of construction material, access of larger vehicles, etc. While the builder states that these risks rest with him alone in the form of sunken costs and/or diminishing return on investment, I would have to disagree. If the build becomes unfeasible or prohibitively expensive, then the SUP will have served only to open Pandora's Box for future SUPs. It will have lowered Del Ray's standards and undercut the Council's footing from which to argue against the proposed build of anyone with a large yard lacking street frontage looking to cram more buildings where they don't belong, all without ever breaking ground on the project in question. The Council does not need me to tell them that there are builders watching the outcome of this decision with bated breath.
2. **INCONSISTENT WITH CURRENT ADU ZONING RULES:** According to Section 7-203 A, the owner must maintain the property as their primary residence in order to apply for an ADU permit. During the 04 Jan 24 hearing, the owner was on record plainly stating that he intends to use the lot as an investment property for short-term/long-term renters. This should be reason enough to send the SUP applicants and City Staff back to the drawing board to present a design sans ADU.
3. **INCREASES FLOODING RISK:** The lot in question sits on 2,600 sqft of water-saturated soil. The proposed design would build a massive underground structure, lot-line to lot-line, in the Hooffs Run Watershed. Several neighbors already experience significant flooding, and there should be no question that the construction of a 1,200+ sqft impermeable basement will only exacerbate this issue by displacing an inordinate amount of water to the down-slope homes. It should be noted that the SUP applicant admitted to forgoing any rigorous civil engineering studies until after the SUP is approved. Although I can understand not wanting to pay for costly environmental-impact site surveys until after project approval, it should nevertheless be recognized that any claim to the contrary of increased flooding risks is uninformed and unsubstantiated. The simple fact is the proposed building will increase water flow to the Mount Vernon Ave properties due to increased rain runoff and the structural impediment to subterranean streams.
4. **IGNORES COMMON SENSE/HISTORIC PRECEDENCE:** The former Director of Planning and Zoning, Barbara Ross, at one time made an official determination in writing that the lot in question was not buildable due to the lack of street frontage, among another things. Although I recognize the current Director's right to disagree with his predecessor, I hope it adds weight to the three "nay" votes cast at the 04 Jan 24 hearing. Being that the SUP was not submitted under the new Z4H/Z4A rules,

nothing material has changed since Ms. Ross's commonsense determination, reducing the four Planning Commissioner's "yay" votes to personality-based opinions at odds with their former AND current colleagues. Opinions that, as I've said, stem from a misguided conflation of Z4H/Z4A with H4H (housing for the sake of housing).

5. **DECREASES SURROUNDING PROPERTY APPEAL/VALUE:** As there is nothing comparable to the proposed build in Del Ray, and for good reason, our houses will be uniquely disadvantaged when renting or selling. Potential renters/buyers will inevitably compare our homes to others in Del Ray and find no others saddled by a modern structure nested only a few feet from 10 surrounding properties. It is not a desirable feature to be closely packed to a house who uses a public alley as their private dual-purpose driveway/sidewalk and sole point of entry.
6. **PROJECT LACKED PUBLIC OUTREACH:** Outside of an initial pitch given by the SUP Applicants as to what they planned to build, there has been no attempt on the part of the City Staff or Owners of the lot to engage with the surrounding residents. Even after objections were raised by DLRUC, DRCA, and affected neighbors during a public-dialogue session held on 08 Nov 23. Still, the City Staff and Owners took no action to assuage the rising number of legitimate concerns. If compatibility is a measure to determine whether an SUP should be awarded, then siloed staffing of these plans should be a non-starter.
7. **P&Z DECISION MARRED WITH LOGICAL FALLACIES/FACTUAL ERRORS:** At the 04 Jan 24 hearing, the Planning and Zoning Commission wrongly posited that those residents who were not present at the hearing were likely in support of the SUP. I am happy for the Commissioners, who are apparently so far removed from the toils of daily life that it would not first occur to them residents are simply too preoccupied with work/life demands to attend a Planning and Zoning Hearing at 10pm on a Thursday. To assert that the mere absence of a neighbor is tantamount to their support of the SUP throws Occam's Razor off a high tower of spurious conjecture. The Commissioners also drew false comparisons between this SUP, a Single-Family lot, and the dimensions of an adjacent Detached-Unit in a failed attempt to argue away its substandard size. I trust this Council understands that these layouts have completely different zoning requirements. Lastly, the Staff's transportation representative referenced the city layouts of foreign countries to try and establish precedence for building a home with no private access here in Del Ray. How the urban design of Itaewon, South Korea should have any bearing on this decision I will never know.

CONCLUSION: Common sense tells me that there are simply too many glaring issues that the Council must overlook/waive in order to permit construction of one \$1M+ Single-Family Home on a lot unfit for such a dwelling. One that uncharacteristic of the surrounding lots, lacks street frontage, increases the risk of flooding, lowers Del Ray's lowest common denominator for allowable SUPs, rewards City Staff's siloed staffing methods, ignores historic and dissenting opinions of the Planning and Zoning Commission, etc. When a single decision

satisfies one party while simultaneously harming a dozen more, the question is not whether you should say “NO” to (SUP) #2023-00076, but under what rationale could you possibly say “yes!?”

Thank you for your consideration.

Very Respectfully,

JOHN C. BURDICK – M.S. | PMP

[1409 Mount Vernon Ave.](#)

[Alexandria VA, 22301](#)

john.cam.burdick@gmail.com

Office: (703) 571-1875

Cell: (203) 331-5308

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Singh, Raj <raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 15, 2024 3:03 PM
To: Justin Wilson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Amy Jackson; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP #2023-00076: SAY NO to 404A East Alexandria on 24 FEB
Attachments: 11.20.23 404A E. Alexandria Ave SUP Letter to PC - Google Docs.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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My name is Raj Singh and I am the owner of 404 E Alexandria. I am writing, *again*, in *opposition* of the Special Use Permission (SUP) application for 404 A E Alexandria lot (Applicants: Eric Teran and Daniela Gross).

1. Del Ray Citizens Association recommended not supporting SUP (see attached file)
2. Building an ADU is *against* zoning code as this is not their primary resident nor **will** it be at project start.
 - a. City Council approved ADU policy on January 23, 2021 at their regular public hearing. City Council amended the policy to include the following: **Require homeowners to maintain primary residence of the subject property at the time of ADU construction.**
 - b. Link to bullet a ([Accessory Dwelling Units in Alexandria | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#))
 - c. Mr Teran is on record (4 Jan meeting) stating he WILL NOT live at the property
3. It fails 12-401: Applicants disregard for the community and neighbors is egregious as this two-dwelling design is 100% out of character for the neighborhood and immediate area.
 - a. It does not meet the basic standard of the neighborhood and surrounding area
4. **There is no frontage.** This is uncharacteristic of any other house in Del Ray and increases foot traffic in an active alley raising the risk of pedestrian accidents
 - a. Safety will decrease due to increased traffic in an alley not built with visual clearances
 - b. Trash trucks, firetrucks, UPS, FEDEX, etc are not able to enter the alleyway
5. Planning commission vote was 4-3; resulting in a controversial approval
6. Planning commission was misguided when comparing lots, comparing lot sizes with street frontage with this application with a lot with no street frontage (as every teacher in our school district would say "Apple and Oranges")
7. Most, if not all, immediate neighbors are against this build
 - a. Would you want a house built behind a dozen homes?

I am unable to attend the 24 FEB meeting but am sending this e-mail with the hope you take it into consideration and deny this application.

V/r,

-raj and kim singh

Raj Singh

Department of Homeland Security
OFFICE: Microsoft Teams
MOBILE: 202.897.8175
e-mail: raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov

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Nov. 20, 2023

Karl W. Moritz, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
City Hall, Room 2100
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: SUP2023-00076
404A E. Alexandria Ave

Dear Mr. Moritz,

At the Nov. 8 membership meeting, the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA) voted to oppose the new single family residence with a “detached” Accessory Dwelling Unit on a substandard lot at 404 E Alexandria Ave for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project does not meet the historical development pattern of Del Ray by not having street frontage.
2. Fire truck and life safety emergency access to the site.
3. Stormwater management on the site due to the historical flooding concentrated on the western end of the 400 block of E. Alexandria Ave.
4. The exclusion of the basement from the FAR calculation and setbacks is questionable as we do not think it meets the zoning requirements for being below the average grade calculation based on the proposed basement exterior walls in the courtyard.
5. Utility impact on the neighbors due to the numerous overhead electrical wires, the outflow connection for stormwater, and the construction issues with the site.
6. Impact of proposed construction on trees both on city owned and neighbors' properties.





7. Vision clearance at alley entrances.

The Del Ray Citizens Association Land Use Committee (DRCA LUC) held a public Zoom meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023. The applicant presented the SUP application that had been submitted to the City. Members of the community who were in attendance were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. On Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023, during the regular DRCA Zoom membership meeting, an abbreviated presentation was made and the motion set forth by the LUC was discussed.

The historical development pattern in Del Ray is to have houses that front on a street. Although alley homes exist in Old Town, it is not part of Del Ray's development and the proposal was not supported.

One of the main concerns of the neighbors was the potential restricted fire and life safety emergency vehicle access to the site due to the fact it does not have street frontage. The public alleys are only 10' wide and even the trash and recycling trucks cannot make it through the alleys. The various contractors currently pull the trash & recycle cans down the alley to the trucks parked on the street as the alley is too narrow.

The western end of E. Alexandria Ave near Mt. Vernon Ave has experienced numerous major floods during rain storms. The applicant was advised that the subterranean courtyard they are proposing will be exposed to flooding when these storms occur, with the potential of 3 -4 feet of stormwater entering the house as has happened to other residences. While it is conceivable that stormwater management features could mitigate the rain that could build up in the courtyard, it will take more than a sump pump dumping water onto grade to control the water. Tying into city storm drains will be necessary, and it is unclear at this time how the applicant would propose to deal with the water.

The project as designed is dependent on the basement square footage being excluded from the FAR calculation, and the assumption that because the basement does not count as FAR, the ADU is considered detached even though there are continuous interior spaces between the primary dwelling and the ADU. The LUC questioned whether the basement would comply for being below the average grade calculation. In addition, the setbacks do



not appear to be in compliance. It appears the foundation will project into the public alleys for the portion of the basement that is shown against the property lines.

The neighbors were also concerned about the numerous overhead electrical lines that supply power to their homes. The lines are fed off of a power pole that is at the north end of the project site and criss-cross overhead. Although the applicant stated he had had discussions with Dominion Power, an actual plan for how their homes would remain in service cannot be developed until the project is approved and the neighbors were left questioning what would happen.

There are also construction issues to be addressed in accessing the site due to the narrow alleys. The proposed structures encompass most of the site and there is not enough site available to use for staging during construction. The applicant stated that craning building materials over the row houses on Mt. Vernon was not feasible.

There are three trees on adjacent property whose root zones would be impacted by the retaining walls of the subterranean courtyard. Two are in the rear corners of 404 and 406 E. Alexandria and the other is on City-owned property adjacent to the site. The applicant has had discussions with the City Arborist about the City owned tree, but it appears the trees on the neighbors' properties have not been addressed.

Lastly, though an existing condition, the vision clearances at the alley entrances was pointed out by the neighbors as being potentially hazardous.

While we understand that the applicant is treating this as a feasibility study and does not want to invest too much time or money into the project before confirming if it is a buildable lot, the DRCA feels like there are too many unanswered variables regarding the proposed house and substandard lot. For these reasons, we cannot support the application.

During the meeting, the applicant stated that he intended to rent out the house and ADU. This information brought up the question of how this could be allowed, as zoning code section 7-203.B.6 Accessory dwellings, states that "the owner of the property shall maintain the property as their primary residence at the time the permit required by



BRINGING NEIGHBORS TOGETHER

7-203(A), above, is issued.” Requiring owner occupancy of either the primary dwelling or the ADU was of paramount importance when the DRCA originally supported the ADU ordinance. This was in order to control the use of the ADU and to discourage both units on a property being used for short-term rentals (VRBO and AirBnBs). Staff revealed that there was no formalized method for determining primary residence and that there was a Staff-level interpretation made on how to handle a proposal for both a new house and new ADU built on a vacant lot. It seems the primary residence requirement is effectively being ignored by this interpretation policy. This was quite a surprise to members of the DRCA and is something that needs clarification to both staff and the community. We are concerned that lack of enforcement of the primary residence requirement will lead to the majority of ADUs being used as short-term rentals, or by a developer to build out the maximum envelope of a site pushing the sale price higher, rather than providing additional affordable housing. Learning that there is not a homeowner living on site to talk to about mis-use of the ADU degrades the quality of life for those living adjacent to the property. We realize that the ADU topic deserves discussion separate from the SUP proposal under review, and would like to request that it be addressed with a written response to the DRCA outlining the current enforcement of the code.

Sincerely,

Kristine Hesse, DRCA LUC Co-Chair
Lisa Lettieri, DRCA LUC Co-Chair

Katie Waynick
DRCA President

cc: Sam Shelby, P & Z
Rachel Drescher, P & Z
Eric Teran, Eustilus Architects

Dear City Councilmembers:

We write to express our opposition to the Special Use Permit (“SUP”) application regarding 404A East Alexandria Avenue (SUP, #2023-00076, Docket #10 at the January 20, 2024, City Council meeting). This application does not conform with Alexandria Zoning for Housing and City Building Codes. The application has also subverted important community engagement processes and fails to account for the substantial impacts that this unique property will have on numerous adjoining neighbors. For the reasons set forth below we respectfully request that you reject this application.

1. The application violates Alexandria’s Zoning Ordinance

The application is in direct violation of at least two regulations under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria (“Zoning Ordinance”). First, Article VII, § 7-203(B)(6) states that, for an accessory dwelling unit (“ADU”) to be permissible, “the owner of the property shall maintain the property as their primary residence at the time the permit . . . is issued.” The proposed building plan is a two-story single family dwelling with an ADU. The applicants have maintained that they do not plan to use the property as their primary residence. Accordingly, the proposal does not conform with the City’s zoning requirements for ADU’s and the application should be rejected on this ground alone.

Second, the application violates the Zoning Ordinance at Article III, § 3-505 related to R-2-5/Single and two-family because it does not meet the minimum lot size requirements. § 3-505 specifies the following in relevant part:

- *Lot size.* Each principal use shall be located on a lot with a minimum land area of 5,000 square feet, except in the case of a corner lot in which case the minimum land area shall be 6,500 square feet. § 3-505(A)(1)
- *Lot frontage.* The minimum lot frontage at the front lot line shall be 40 feet, except in the case of a two-family semi-detached dwelling, in which case the minimum lot frontage shall be 37.5 feet for each dwelling unit. § 3-505(C).

The lot is 2,600 square feet and therefore fails to meet the minimum lot size requirements of 5,000 feet under § 3-505(A)(1). The lot also does not possess any lot frontage contemplated by § 3-505(C), as it occurs in an alley surrounded by existing dwellings. The Staff acknowledges that this would be the only developed lot in Del Ray without frontage. Notably, the previous property owners inquired about building on the property and the Director of Planning and Zoning at the time made an official determination that the lot did not possess the buildable street frontage, and the property was previously determined unbuildable by the City. Accordingly the proposal fails to meet the minimum lot frontage requirements.

The proposal should be rejected based on noncompliance with the City’s Zoning Code.

2. The applicants failed to initiate the proper community engagement processes

The City Council should also consider the lack of consultation with the affected neighbors. Communication from the applicants was limited to a one-time and one-sided dialogue. The applicants did not solicit feedback or engage with community members about their concerns related to the project.

Our residence at 404 East Alexandria Ave, for example, will be uniquely impacted by the dwelling’s construction. The address of the proposed structure is 404A East Alexandria Ave. The property confusingly possesses the appearance of being an ADU to our residence at 404 East Alexandria Ave. Access to 404A East Alexandria is via Mount Vernon Avenue pursuant to the proposed plan for access. In fact, vehicles can’t fit through the alley via East Alexandria Avenue. This inconsistency creates a dangerous confusion that will interfere with our use and enjoyment of our residence. The applicants have not consulted with us to ensure that potential confusion (*i.e.* mail, deliveries, and short-term renters) that the apparent shared address will create.

Further, it appears that the current proposal diverges from the original filing, which the impacted neighbors only learned through public filings. The impacted community was never given an opportunity to voice concerns to the applicant or the City Planning Commission until the January 4, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting regarding whether the project should move forward – a step in the process too late for the applicant or commission to properly evaluate alternatives.

The lack of consultation and transparency with us and the other surrounding residents underscores the rushed nature of the proposal. At a minimum, the council should defer a decision on the project so that the impacted residents can be consulted with.

3. The application fails to account for environmental impacts

As stated by others impacted residents, the hydrologic formation under the lot results in large quantities of water being diverted from our residences via highly active sump pumps. Our sump pump for instance runs almost constantly during rain events and its frequent use requires substantial maintenance and repair. The proposal does not account for the diversion of water and impact to Hooffs Run and our homes’ infrastructure. An environmental review of this impact should be conducted before the City Council considers whether to approve the project.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request that you reject the the proposal under SUP, #2023-00076.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jonah and Sarah Brown
404 East Alexandria Ave, Alexandria, VA, 22301

10
1-20-24

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Eric Weiner <ejw77@me.com>
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 6:33 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; PlanComm
Cc: Leah Kegler; Angela Rice; Angela Welsh; ERNEST PICKELL; Ken Boland; annasmiller@yahoo.com; Atilla Sarah; Bridget Donohue; Brett Rice; cherie marfori; Cindy Savery; Debbie Sikes; erniepickell@gmail.com; Fred Hauchman; Ingrid Jud Allen; Benji; maryannring@comcast.net; Mary Reding; nadine@thebolands.net; Nellie Hauchman; Peter Savery; Sonia Teran; Family; Sarah Kocsis; Vince Delagarde; Atilla Kocsis
Subject: [EXTERNAL]January 20 City Council Public Hearing_Opposition to Special Use Permit # 2023-00076 - 404A E Alexandria Ave

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Dear Alexandria City Council Members,

The Alexandria Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 4th to consider a request for a special use permit (#2023-00076) to construct what can only be described as an unwelcome "Frankenstein" bunker/house at 404A E Alexandria Ave. Despite unanimous opposition voiced by several residents living near the property, the Planning Commission voted 4-3 to approve the permit.

We live down the street from this property at 414 E Alexandria Ave. We purchased a single family home here a few years back in large part because of charm and character of the street. Beautiful craftsman style homes with manicured lawns and flower gardens line the street and Japanese cherry and maple trees bloom in the spring and fall.

The proposed structure at 414A will have none of this quality or charm and the owner intends for this to be a transient, short-term rental property, not a thoughtful addition to the neighborhood. It would also be a nuisance for our neighbors on Mt. Vernon Ave. who depend on the alley for entry/exit and waste services.

We join our numerous fellow neighbors on E Alexandria Ave. and Mt. Vernon Ave. in opposing this proposed construction for the reasons outlined below. We also invite you to visit the micro-lot at 404A and see for yourselves where developer Eric Teran intends to brute-force a dwelling between existing property lines.

If you visit, you will see why no one developed this property. Please see the attached photos to give you an idea.

Our Primary reasons for opposition include:

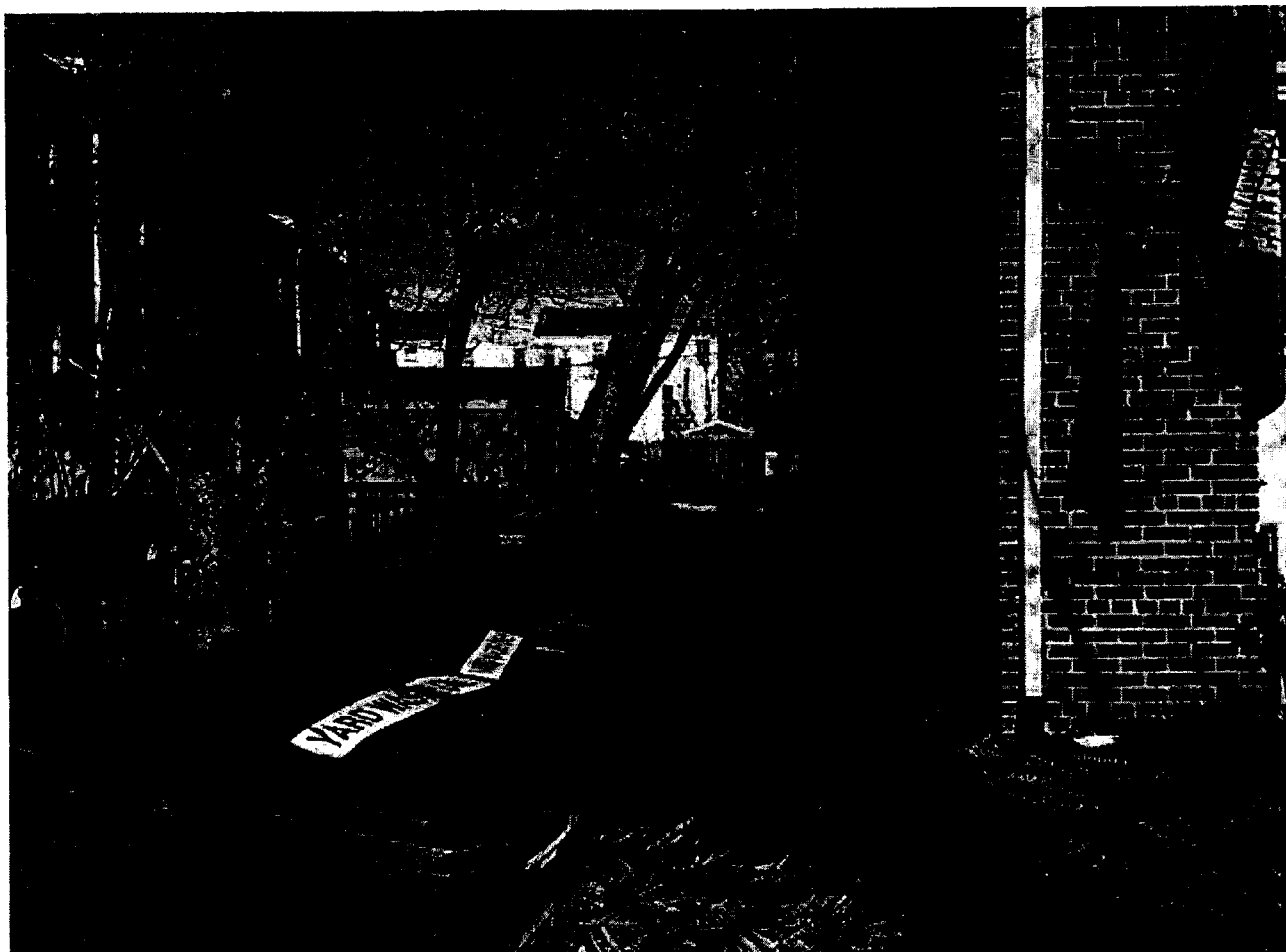
- This project does not fit with the character of Del Ray
- The plan will kill the large, 100+ year old tree on the adjacent property and the only consequence for killing it is to replace it with a 2in diameter tree + a \$200 penalty - this is unacceptable
- Stormwater management will not be able to keep up ...70% of the proposed home is underground and will flood and the lack of a street to run the water to will invariably flood the adjacent properties.
- Mt. Vernon Ave. and East Alexandria Ave lack sufficient parking to support this proposed dwelling. There is also insufficient space for construction vehicles/equipment to safely stage at the lot.

- Three of the four alleys surrounding the home are unimproved and don't provide access to the home
- If approved, this project would set a terrible precedent whereby builders and developers will build similarly ugly structures that will divide existing lots.
- This lot has no street frontage and the fire department would not have the necessary access for timely emergency response
- Eric Teran and Daniela Gross are developers looking to make a profit rather than live in a Del Ray home that retains the character of the neighborhood. When challenged at the planning commission meeting, Eric Teran said he would just get permits from the city to achieve his construction plan. His responses made it clear that he is not giving serious consideration to the real issues his proposed project will create for the people living in our neighborhood.

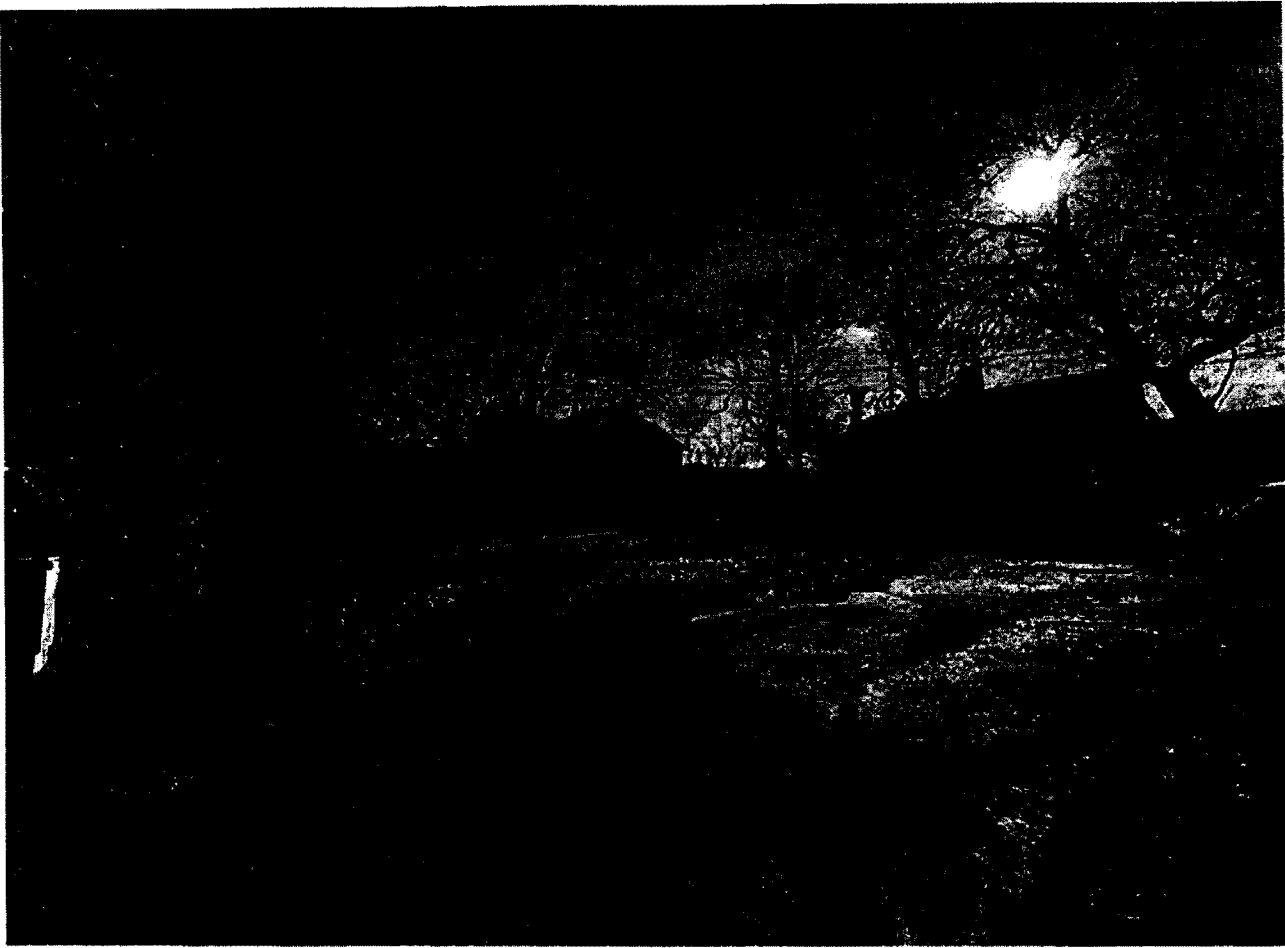
Please vote to oppose this project.

Thank you.

Eric Weiner and Leah Kegler







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From: Eric Weiner ejw77@me.com

Sent: Thursday January 4, 2024 7:58 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Opposition to Special Use Permit #2023-00067 - 404A E Alexandria Ave

Good evening Mr. Pierce and Planning Commission Members,

We live at 414 E Alexandria Ave and we are participating in the public hearing via Zoom. We are writing to express our total opposition to the granting of Special Use Permit #2023-00067 - 404A E Alexandria Ave.

Some of our main reasons for opposition include:

- This project does not fit with the character of Del Ray

- The plan will kill the large, 100+ year old tree on the adjacent property and the only consequence for killing it is to replace it with a 2in diameter tree + a \$200 penalty - this is unacceptable

- Stormwater management will not be able to keep up ...70% of the home is underground and will flood and the lack of a street to run the water to will invariably flood the adjacent properties.

- East Alexandria Ave lacks sufficient parking to support this proposed dwelling

- Three of the four alleys surrounding the home are unimproved and don't provide access to the home

- If approved, this project would set a terrible precedent whereby builders and developers will build similarly ugly structures that will divide existing lots.

- This lot has no street frontage and the fire department would not have the necessary access for timely emergency response

- Eric Teran and Daniela Gross are investors looking to make a profit rather than live in a Del Ray home that retains the character of the neighborhood

Thank you to you and the planning commission for considering our concerns and opposition,

Eric Weiner and Leah Kegler

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your continued service representing the best interests of our community. Change is not easy, particularly for a city with extensive historical roots, and as you steer our City through Northern Virginia's growth, I remain proud of your leadership in ensuring that Alexandria maintains a healthy and inclusive community.

The health of our community has embodied a personal obligation to contribute through community service. To date, I have volunteered over 400 hours to the Alexandria Health Department's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team. This includes weekends supporting and supervising: annual mass influenza vaccination events, several COVID-19 mass testing events, large COVID-19 vaccine clinics that immunized over a thousand community members to smaller clinics in neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic, and pediatric vaccine clinics. I also volunteered at the Health Department's COVID-19 call center and as a COVID-19 contract tracer and case investigator. These opportunities gave me a unique opportunity to cross paths with other Alexandrians from different walks of life, and I have left every event prouder of being a resident of this City.

However, I am writing to express my disappointment at the lack of community engagement or consideration by the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Alexandria Planning Commission on the application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Avenue. I only learned about changes in the original application through public filings of the final document, interpreting these documents as a non-subject matter expert with other impacted neighbors, and attending the Planning Commission meeting on January 4, 2024. Beyond these filings and forum, we were never given an opportunity to learn about changes, exchange concerns, or explore alternatives with the City Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant, even though my residence and those of my neighbors would be negatively affected by this new single-family residence with a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit.

This lengthy letter seems to be the last opportunity for community-level input. The first and only opportunity for dialogue was hosted by the Del Ray Citizen Association (DRCA), which did its job in allowing for deliberation and voting in opposition to this SUP (re. letter sent to Mr. Moritz, Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning). But, instead of following up with DRCA's letter and those of my neighbors, the Department of Planning and Zoning responded through a final report that recommended approval of the SUP permit. Not only did their official report not address the significant concerns in those letters, it only raised more questions. We only wished for dialogue and the Planning and Zoning Staff didn't respond to our requests. Adding to the sting was that we first learned about adaptations at the Planning Commission meeting, after the Staff filed their report and recommendations.

I am in full agreement with my neighbor's and DRCA's concerns and since there is no other opportunity for dialogue with the Planning and Zoning Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant. I am presenting my main concerns through this letter and hopefully as verbal testimony to you, as our City Council.

- Firstly, our residences are part of the Hooffs Run Watershed that sit on-top of underground streams that drain into the very-active Hooffs Run. Most of the recent flooding events, specifically those off Monroe Avenue and off Commonwealth Avenue in the Rosemont Neighborhood, are associated with our watershed. The streams immediately underneath and surrounding our residences have not been disturbed since our multi-unit townhomes were built in the late 1930's with sump pumps being a necessity. My sump pump routinely runs multiple

times during dry periods and almost continuously during rain and snow events. It also takes several days for the large “puddles” on the 404A E Alexandria lot to absorb into the ground after a modest rain event, confirming that the soil is already water-logged by active streams with little capacity for additional run-off. Building a solid structure that runs to the edge of the lot with a predominantly underground footprint will stress these active sub-terrain streams. Since our townhomes are below 404A E Alexandria, it is highly likely that the streams will be diverted and focused into our basements if the proposed building is constructed. My own sump pump is unlikely to handle increased demand and I would predict that putting in a single-family home at 404A E Alexandria could make the surrounding ten homes unlivable given their age and cost for reinforced infrastructure.

- Secondly, the only vehicular access to the proposed unit is through a small public alley off Mount Vernon Avenue. Approving this permit will increase the danger to our immediate community by converting a lightly-used alleyway into an active vehicular thoroughfare. Driving onto Mount Vernon Avenue from this alley means that the driver must first cross an active sidewalk connecting the Braddock Road Metro Station, GW Middle School, and the rest of Alexandria to Del Ray’s “downtown” core. Then, the driver must carefully navigate onto Mount Vernon Avenue after passing parked cars at the edge of the alley entrance, with additional effort that car and bicycle cross-traffic is aware given that the entrance is not obvious (as it is in the middle of the block) or visible from the street. There have been several occasions of cars blocking the alley because visitors thought it was a viable parking spot. The City’s refuse, recycling, and compost collection staff also will not attempt to drive down the alley and instead service our townhomes by parking on Alexandria Avenue and walking down the alley. The detached Accessory Dwelling Unit described in the SUP application has its own dedicated kitchen and laundry in addition to those within the main building, elevating concern that the proposed construction is for two separately-resided buildings. This alley and its intersection with the sidewalk and Mount Vernon Avenue is not designed for the likely increased traffic pressure introduced by two new family units at 404A E Alexandria and regular services such as Amazon or other delivery providers.
- Most shockingly, during verbal testimony provided by the staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning at the Planning Commission meeting, one significant justification for their final recommendation was based on the proposed goals of Zoning For Housing/Housing For All (ZFH). My love of the diversity and inclusivity of this City should show that I am in full support of ZFH and I applaud the Council’s leadership on this issue. However, the residence described in the application for this SUP does not address the vision as it is proposed as a single-family residence (although this counters the design, as mentioned above) that the applicant testified is intended to be a rental. If these are rented, I highly doubt these will be offered at sub-market rental rates as this is not described anywhere. The intended use and design of these buildings are not the model that should represent the vision of ZFH and it is insincere to make that claim. I remain disappointed that these City Staff wanted to distract the lack of substance in their report by politicizing an issue unrelated to this SUP application.

Our family focused our housing search on Alexandria when we were moving back to this region after several years in Seattle. After living in eight different cities, Alexandria is the only city I have ever wanted to put down roots, a commitment that resulted in the purchase of our first home. The past five years have been nothing but amazing, including new routines of weekend walks throughout Alexandria’s diverse neighborhoods, enjoying the multitude of cuisines from Old Town and Arlandria to the West End,

and partaking in multiple events, festivals, farmer's markets, and local theater. We typically find ourselves comparing Alexandria during our vacations, often to the detriment of the cities we're visiting.

As you review this SUP application and my comments, I also ask the City Council to recognize that this review process lacked transparency and community engagement, with concerns filed by my neighbors and DRCA remaining unaddressed. This process has been disappointingly frustrating, and I am speaking as a resident who loves Alexandria and the community represented by its residents and dedicated civil servants.

Again, thanks for this opportunity to voice my concerns. I welcome a call, email, or opportunity to meet if you have any questions about the content of this letter or want to learn more about my concerns about this application or the lack of transparency and engagement in its review.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (with Yashin Lin)

1407 Mt Vernon Ave

markdlim@gmail.com

January 18, 2024

RE: Opposition to SUP for 404A E Alexandria Ave, Docket 10

Dear Members of the Alexandria City Council,

I am writing to bring to your attention crucial information and concerns raised by the community regarding the Special Use Permit (SUP) application for the proposed development at 404A. The Planning Commission public hearing on January 4, 2024, revealed several points that necessitate a more thorough and objective examination of this project. Opposition to this SUP includes dozens of surrounding neighbors, the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA), and its Land Committee. All have strongly requested the denial of this SUP, signaling the need for the City Council's intervention.

The Planning Commission's 4 to 3 vote in favor of the SUP demonstrates the divisive nature of this proposal. The concerns outlined below highlight the potential adverse effects on our community if the SUP is approved:

Failure to Meet §12-401 (C): The proposed dwellings at 404A do not align with the existing neighborhood character, violating lot area and width requirements. The Contemporary style and lack of frontage are inconsistent with Del Ray's historical development. The CSRs admit this, but their rationale overlooks the unique nature of this alley lot, setting a problematic precedent for housing construction in our community.

Diminishing Property Values: The CSRs' assertion that 404A will not diminish surrounding property values lacks evidentiary support. The crowded-in backyard visual, impaired parking spaces, increased fire risks, stormwater runoff, and destruction of mature trees could all contribute to a reduction in value for neighboring homes. The proximity of 404A to narrow alleys poses challenges for emergency access, potentially lowering the future value of nearby properties.

FAR Calculation Inaccuracy: The DRCA warns that the design is dependent on an incorrect basement square footage exclusion from the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculation. Independent analysis is needed to verify the FAR calculation, ensuring compliance with zoning regulations.

Breach of ADU Rules: The admission by developers that they will not reside in either the primary residence or the ADU, but rather lease both out, violates zoning code section 7-203.B6. This breach undermines the intent of ADUs to provide affordable housing, setting a precedent for developers to use ADUs as profit centers going against the intent of the Affordable Housing for All policy.

Parking Concerns and "Party in a Box" Effect: The already crowded streets in our neighborhood face additional strain with the proposed development at 404A. Inadequate parking provisions and the potential for increased transient tenants could exacerbate

parking challenges. Furthermore, the box-like architecture raises concerns about creating a 'party in a box' effect in our backyards, disrupting the peace and harmony of the neighborhood.

Considering these concerns and the community's overwhelming opposition, I implore you to pause the approval of the SUP for 404A. This project, if approved, risks setting detrimental precedents and jeopardizing the unique character of Del Ray. Your intervention is crucial to ensuring the well-being and harmony of our neighborhood.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mary Reding
Concerned Property Owner and Neighbor
412 E Alexandria Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22301
(937) 609-4549

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Justin Reynolds <justinreynolds@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2024 7:30 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: Rachel M Drescher; Karl Moritz; Tony LaColla; Sam Shelby
Subject: [EXTERNAL]City Council Public Hearing: Docket No. 10

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Some people who received this message don't often get email from justinreynolds@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers,

My family and I have lived in the city of Alexandria for 27 years. First I rented, then my wife and I moved into a townhome, and then were fortunate enough to move into a single-family home. Finding our single-family home was a difficult and cumbersome process as the housing stock was limited and there was virtually no vacant land to build on. The few lots that were available were constrained by existing site conditions such as streams, easements, and zoning regulations.

I am in support of this project for three reasons.

1. The city needs more housing. We have several friends who have been looking to move into Alexandria for years, but simply could not due to the limited availability of houses.
2. This home design is a truly innovative solution that creates an attractive home while thoughtfully maintaining access for neighbors and keeping a beautiful mature tree.
3. I understand that due to this creative design the project is only asking the council to review minor aspects of the project related to lot size and parking.

Respectfully,

Justin Reynolds
3970 Fort Worth Ave.

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Raj Singh <raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 9:13 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; Brett Rice; Angela Rice; Catharine Rice
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Special use permit 404-A E. Alexandria Ave – Substandard Lot without Street

[You don't often get email from raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

> ALCON,

>

> I'm writing, as the owner of 404 E Alexandria, Raj and Kim Singh, about the development behind our home. There is a reason it hasn't been built on all this time, and there is a real possibility three large mature trees will die. A 2500 fine or 2 inch tree replacement isn't an acceptable solution.

>

> I'm curious how will the construction equipment get to the site and where will it be stored? Both alleys leading to the site are too narrow. In addition, within Del Ray, I don't believe a home has been built with no street frontage, and the architecture of the home doesn't fit in with the area.

>

> The owner is a well known individual who owns several properties and lists them as short term rentals. While it's unknown if this will be a short term rental, one can take the available data and conclude it will be. I know homes are allowed to be STRs.... But allowing this doesn't adhere to more housing for residents if only tourists are using it.

>

> Two Del Ray committees stated no to building on this site, so it's also peculiar city council would go against the advice given.

>

> I'm available to talk, and I am against approving this special use permit.

>

> Raj and Kim

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Raj Singh <raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 9:13 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; Brett Rice; Angela Rice; Catharine Rice
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Special use permit 404-A E. Alexandria Ave – Substandard Lot without Street

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

[You don't often get email from raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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> Raj and Kim

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From: Catharine Rice <catharine.rice@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 9:40 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP 2023-00076: Please say No to 404A E Alexandria on Jan 20
Attachments: Rough parameter of where two dwellings will be built.png; Applicant falsely depicts alleys as straight & clear-2.png; Applicant misrepresents Mt Vernon & rear alleys as straight and clear-1.JPG; Photo of 1413 Mt Vernon and alley perspectives-3.png; Photo of Mt Vernon and East Alexandria Alleys-4.png; 404A Supposed 10 ft back alley.png; DRCA-11.20.23 404A E. Alexandria Ave SUP Letter to PC.pdf

You don't often get email from catharine.rice@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

This email is not showing up on your list. In fact, that of many of our neighbor who oppose are not showing up on your list. So here again!

Please put a pause on this SUP so it can be looked at more objectively. Twelve (12) surrounding neighbors and the **Del Ray Citizens Association and its Land Committee** (attached for easy viewing) have asked that this SUP be denied. That, and a 4 to 3 Planning Commission vote, evidences the need for Alexandria's city council to intervene and deny this ill-designed project. If you support the City Staff Reviewers (CSRs) request to approve, you will, in one fell swoop, establish new precedents for housing construction in Del Ray that are odds with our basic zoning guidelines, our commitment to the historic preservation of the character of Del Ray, the recent ADU rules, and the intent of our new Housing for All zoning rules to bring in new housing, but not by crowding up R-2-5 lots with multiple buildings.

1. It fails §12-401 (C)—These dwellings will not be compatible with the existing neighborhood character

Twelve (12) surrounding neighbors and Del Ray Citizens Association & its Land Use Committee have asked for rejection of this application, which wants to wedge two new dwellings into a substandard lot at 404A East Alexandria. 404A fails the lot area and width requirements and so **is a substandard lot which will not face, nor have any frontage on an actual street, in stark contradiction with the historical development of Del Ray. No such homes exist in Del Ray** and so this application is not compatible with the existing neighborhood character. The City's Staff Reviewers (CSRs) admit this, saying "this is the only alley lot in the Del Ray neighborhood," but they then overlooked this fact by rationalizing that the dwellings will be a smaller size and less visible from the road (Staff Report (SR), p.17, found [here](#)) That fails the test. 404A will also be a Contemporary style. There are no Contemporary designed homes in the neighborhood. The CSRs admit this (SR, p.14) but ignore it with the weak rationale that the home will be rectangular and have a gable roof (SR p.14)(!) They also fail to note that the low-pitched roof is also out of character with the neighborhood.

2. It fails §12-401 (C)—There are numerous indicators that these dwellings will diminish or impair established property values of surrounding homes: The CSRs simply state, with no proof or evidentiary support, that 4040A will not diminish or impair the established property value of surrounding homes. They simply state that the dwellings will increase the value of the land on which they are built, and by extension, this will increase similar size properties of the neighbors.

What the CSRs should have done is address how the value of the surrounding homes could easily face a reduction in value, or impaired future value, based on neighbors and DRCA observations, including: the tight physical crowding into their backyards, the impairment of existing parking spaces, the increased fire risks and stormwater runoff, and the destruction of mature trees. 404A will create a crowded-in, dissonant backyard

visual for the surrounding townhouses, inconsistent with the rest of the neighborhood, which is characterized by homes facing the street, with greenery in the backyard. The Mt Vernon alley is narrow and not straight (despite applicants' drawings, see photos below); and pinches tightly around a large utility box and pole and curves to the East Alexandria alley. Due to the proximity of 404A resting tight against the East Alexandria alley, the townhouses on Mt Vernon street will have impaired access to their back parking spaces, removing value from their homes. The future value of the townhouses could be forced into stasis, due to their proximity to dwellings that will face increased fire risk. 1413 East Alexandria notes that 404A fails to meet the 100-foot emergency access requirement, (SR, p. 98) DRCA points out the narrow alleys are not even accessible by current garbage trucks, let alone fire trucks. (SR, p. 93) (The Applicants have asked for a reduction in the parking requirement from 2 to 1 car due to the difficulty of turning a car around in this site.) The CSRs note the applicant will need a waiver to fire codes during construction. (SR, p. 17). The Applicants admit they will be leasing both dwellings, and will not be living in them. The townhomes located so close to dwellings with transient tenants and impaired emergency access will be seen as less fire safe and of less value. The value of 1413 Mt Vernon will undoubtedly suffer—the owner noted that both the construction trucks and the short- and long-term dwelling lessees will end up using his driveway to turn around in due to the pinched off alley space. (SR, p. 98). Numerous neighbors and the DRCA note the heightened flooding in this area. 1413 Mt Vernon wrote that his home sits at the lowest point in the area, and 404A's increased impervious surface in this high flood zone, will send the flood waters toward his home. (SR, p. 98) This will lead to more decay and potentially lower the future value of his home.

Fails §11-500 -FAR calculation incorrect – SR, p.17.


The DRCA warns that 404A's design is dependent “on the basement square footage being excluded from the FAR calculation.” DRCA points out that the Applicant argues the basement does not count as FAR, and treats the ADU as “detached” even though “there are continuous interior spaces between the primary dwelling and the ADU.” (SR, p. 93). DRCA questioned whether the basement would comply as being “below the average grade calculation.” Yet, the CSR's ignore this observation, and simply accept at face value the Applicant's FAR calculation, choosing not to do their own. This needs independent analysis.

Breach of ADU rules

The Developers have admitted they will not be living in either the primary residence, nor the ADU, but will lease both out (one as an AirBnb). DRCA points out this is not allowed under zoning code section 7-203.B6 which requires that the owners of the property live in the primary residence at the time they apply for an ADU permit. (SR, p. 94) They note that this language was added by city council in 2021 to ensure that the majority of ADUs were not used as short-term rentals or “by a developer to build out the maximum envelope of a site pushing the sale price higher rather than providing additional affordable housing.” If this SUP is approved, the city council will set a new precedent of allowing developers to use ADUs as profit centers rather than avenues for affordable housing.

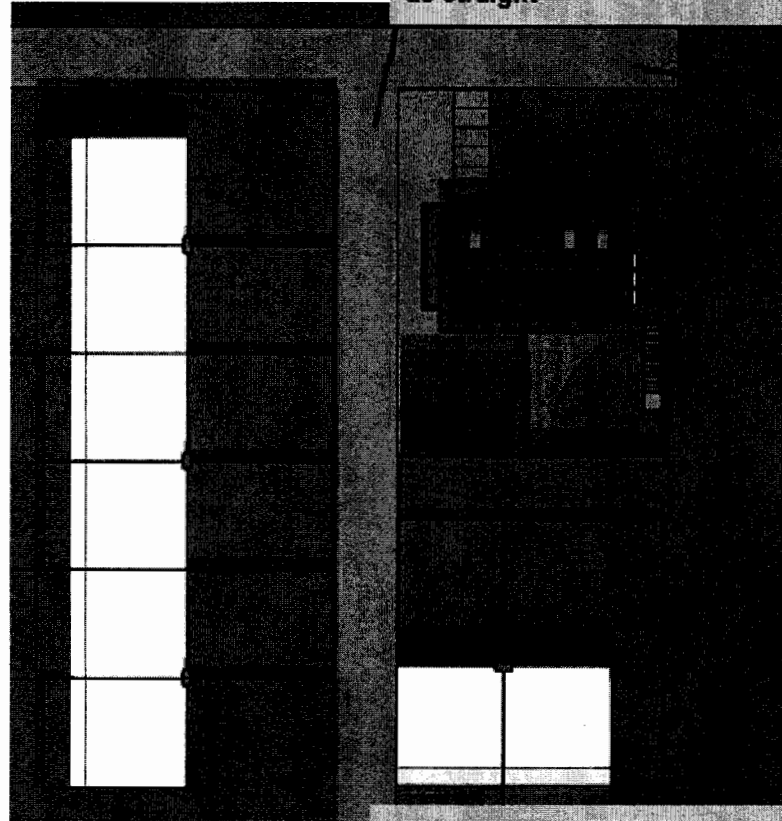
Sincerely,
Catharine Rice
424 East Alexandria Avenue

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DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.



Rough drawing of where two dwellings will be built

**Mt Vernon Ave alley presented
as straight**



Rear alley as 10Ft of clearance

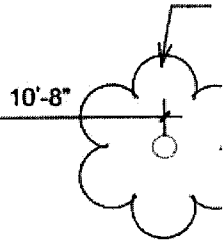
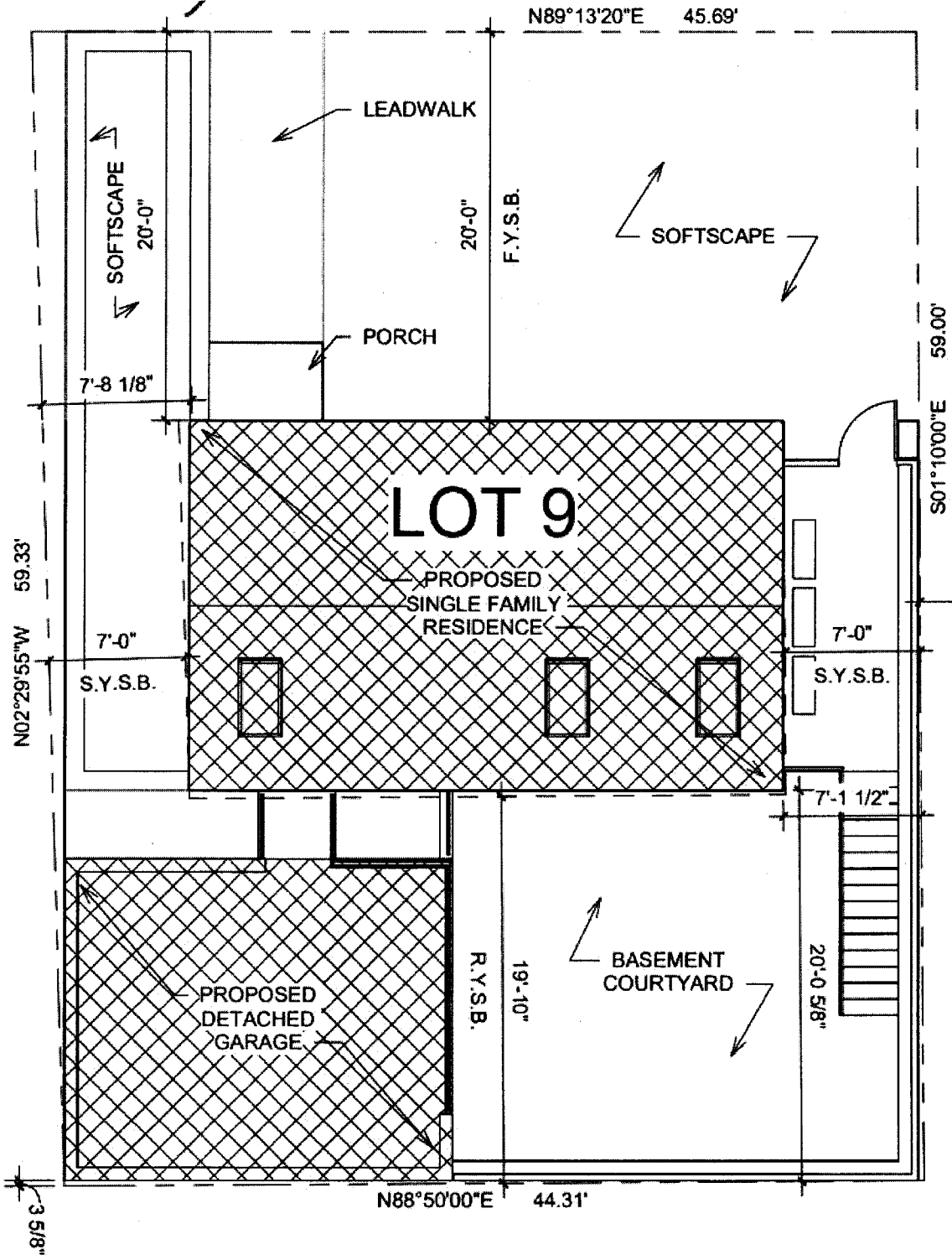
LOT 5

LOT 4

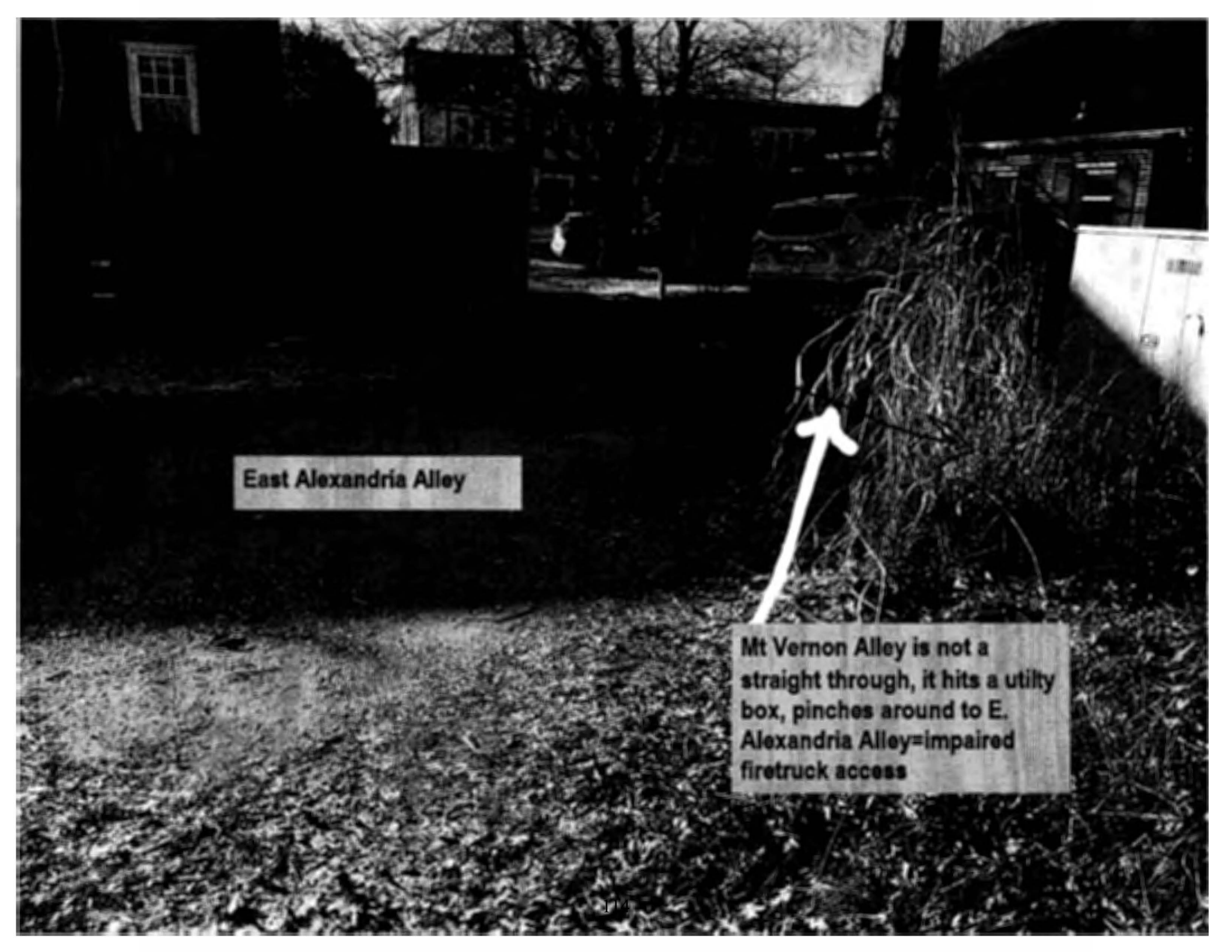
LOT 3

10' PUBLIC ALLEY

11310' PUBLIC ALLEY



UNDEVELOPED



East Alexandria Alley

Mt Vernon Alley is not a straight through, it hits a utility box, pinches around to E. Alexandria Alley=impaired firetruck access

1413 Mount Vernon

Mt Vernon alley runs up against a utility box and pole; is not a standard line alley as drawings present. Will impair firetruck entry or turn

East Alexandria alley

From: Yashin yashin5@gmail.com

Sent: Tuesday November 7, 2023 3:13 PM

To: Rachel M Drescher <rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov>; landuse@delraycitizen.net

Subject: Special Use Permit for 404-A East Alexandria Ave

Dear Ms. Drescher and the DRCA Land Use Committee,

We live and own one of the properties surrounding 404A East Alexandria Ave, the property for which there has been a Special Use Permit application. We would like to express our concern regarding the plans for this property.

Our concerns:

- 1) **Neighborhood character** the plans are completely inconsistent with the character of the neighbourhood, including in lot size and style.
- 2) **Safety:** Since the proposed construction would have no street frontage, there would be reduced access to emergency and fire services, as the alleyway does not provide enough width for a fire engine to get through. Currently, city workers must walk into the alley for trash pickup because the alley is so narrow. If that house were to catch fire, it would definitely endanger all surrounding houses.
- 3) **Electricity service implications:** Construction would also impact the electric lines that run overhead through the lot, and how this would be resolved is unclear.
- 4) **Reduced lighting in surrounding houses:** The proposed house would reduce natural lighting to the back of the houses on E Alexandria and Mount Vernon that currently surround the lot.
- 5) **Tree** Plan execution would certainly require damaging the root system of a large tree at the edge of the lot that is on city property, effectively killing it.
- 6) **Safety:** Car access to the proposed construction would be through the alley that runs from Mount Vernon to East Alexandria. The alley has poor vision clearance since it was meant for infrequent traffic.

In short, we are strongly against the proposed construction and hope our concerns are heard.

Sincerely

Yashin Lin and Mark Lim

1407 Mount Vernon Ave

Alexandria VA 22301

From: Alicia Montgomery <lishmo.202@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 1:17 PM
To: Antoine D Pierce <antoine.pierce@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Opposition to SUP2023-00076

Dear Mr. Pierce,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the granting of a Special Use Permit for the construction of a new home in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia. While I appreciate the need for development and growth, I believe that the proposed plans for this new home do not align with the character of our neighborhood and raise several significant concerns that need to be addressed.

1) Incompatibility with the Neighborhood Character:

The proposed plans for the new home do not conform to the character of our neighborhood. It lacks street frontage, which is an essential element of Del Ray's aesthetic, and does not meet the minimum lot-size standards for new builds. This nonconformity could potentially set a precedent for other out-of-character developments, threatening the overall charm and appeal of the neighborhood.

2) Harm to Surrounding Trees:

The construction of this new home could potentially harm the mature trees that surround the build site. Overhead branches and the root structure of these trees may be adversely affected, leading to long-term damage or loss of our precious green canopy. Preserving our trees is vital for the well-being of our neighborhood and its residents.

3) Reduction of Natural Light and Light Pollution:

The new construction could result in a reduction of natural light available to the surrounding homes. This would not only diminish the quality of life for current residents but also add to light pollution, disrupting the serenity of our micro-neighborhood at night. We cherish the peacefulness and natural beauty of our area and wish to protect it.

4) Safety Concerns:

The proposed development may hinder access for fire engines and emergency medical services in the event of emergencies. This could put residents at risk and decrease response times, which is a crucial safety concern that cannot be overlooked.

5) Impact on Electric Lines:

The construction may have an adverse impact on the electric lines to surrounding homes, potentially leading to power outages or disruptions in the neighborhood. The reliability of utility services is essential for residents, and we must ensure that this is not compromised.

6) Negative Impact on Property Values:

The construction of a new home that does not conform to the neighborhood's standards and character could negatively affect property values in the surrounding area. This, in turn, could have financial repercussions for homeowners who have invested in the community.

I urge you to carefully consider these concerns and take into account the well-being and interests of the residents of Del Ray and the micro-community that this project impacts directly. I respectfully request that you deny the Special Use Permit for the proposed new home until a more suitable and harmonious plan can be developed.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. I trust that you will make decisions that are in the best interests of our beloved Del Ray neighborhood and its residents.

Sincerely,

Alicia Montgomery, owner-resident

406 E. Alexandria Ave

Alexandria, VA 22301

phone 202-689-9617



Nov. 20, 2023

Karl W. Moritz, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
City Hall, Room 2100
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: SUP2023-00076
404A E. Alexandria Ave

Dear Mr. Moritz,

At the Nov. 8 membership meeting, the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA) voted to oppose the new single family residence with a “detached” Accessory Dwelling Unit on a substandard lot at 404 E Alexandria Ave for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project does not meet the historical development pattern of Del Ray by not having street frontage.
2. Fire truck and life safety emergency access to the site.
3. Stormwater management on the site due to the historical flooding concentrated on the western end of the 400 block of E. Alexandria Ave.
4. The exclusion of the basement from the FAR calculation and setbacks is questionable as we do not think it meets the zoning requirements for being below the average grade calculation based on the proposed basement exterior walls in the courtyard.
5. Utility impact on the neighbors due to the numerous overhead electrical wires, the outflow connection for stormwater, and the construction issues with the site.
6. Impact of proposed construction on trees both on city owned and neighbors' properties.





7. Vision clearance at alley entrances.

The Del Ray Citizens Association Land Use Committee (DRCA LUC) held a public Zoom meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023. The applicant presented the SUP application that had been submitted to the City. Members of the community who were in attendance were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. On Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023, during the regular DRCA Zoom membership meeting, an abbreviated presentation was made and the motion set forth by the LUC was discussed.

The historical development pattern in Del Ray is to have houses that front on a street. Although alley homes exist in Old Town, it is not part of Del Ray's development and the proposal was not supported.

One of the main concerns of the neighbors was the potential restricted fire and life safety emergency vehicle access to the site due to the fact it does not have street frontage. The public alleys are only 10' wide and even the trash and recycling trucks cannot make it through the alleys. The various contractors currently pull the trash & recycle cans down the alley to the trucks parked on the street as the alley is too narrow.

The western end of E. Alexandria Ave near Mt. Vernon Ave has experienced numerous major floods during rain storms. The applicant was advised that the subterranean courtyard they are proposing will be exposed to flooding when these storms occur, with the potential of 3 -4 feet of stormwater entering the house as has happened to other residences. While it is conceivable that stormwater management features could mitigate the rain that could build up in the courtyard, it will take more than a sump pump dumping water onto grade to control the water. Tying into city storm drains will be necessary, and it is unclear at this time how the applicant would propose to deal with the water.

The project as designed is dependent on the basement square footage being excluded from the FAR calculation, and the assumption that because the basement does not count as FAR, the ADU is considered detached even though there are continuous interior spaces between the primary dwelling and the ADU. The LUC questioned whether the basement would comply for being below the average grade calculation. In addition, the setbacks do





not appear to be in compliance. It appears the foundation will project into the public alleys for the portion of the basement that is shown against the property lines.

The neighbors were also concerned about the numerous overhead electrical lines that supply power to their homes. The lines are fed off of a power pole that is at the north end of the project site and criss-cross overhead. Although the applicant stated he had had discussions with Dominion Power, an actual plan for how their homes would remain in service cannot be developed until the project is approved and the neighbors were left questioning what would happen.

There are also construction issues to be addressed in accessing the site due to the narrow alleys. The proposed structures encompass most of the site and there is not enough site available to use for staging during construction. The applicant stated that craning building materials over the row houses on Mt. Vernon was not feasible.

There are three trees on adjacent property whose root zones would be impacted by the retaining walls of the subterranean courtyard. Two are in the rear corners of 404 and 406 E. Alexandria and the other is on City-owned property adjacent to the site. The applicant has had discussions with the City Arborist about the City owned tree, but it appears the trees on the neighbors' properties have not been addressed.

Lastly, though an existing condition, the vision clearances at the alley entrances was pointed out by the neighbors as being potentially hazardous.

While we understand that the applicant is treating this as a feasibility study and does not want to invest too much time or money into the project before confirming if it is a buildable lot, the DRCA feels like there are too many unanswered variables regarding the proposed house and substandard lot. For these reasons, we cannot support the application.

During the meeting, the applicant stated that he intended to rent out the house and ADU. This information brought up the question of how this could be allowed, as zoning code section 7-203.B.6 Accessory dwellings, states that "the owner of the property shall maintain the property as their primary residence at the time the permit required by





7-203(A), above, is issued.” Requiring owner occupancy of either the primary dwelling or the ADU was of paramount importance when the DRCA originally supported the ADU ordinance. This was in order to control the use of the ADU and to discourage both units on a property being used for short-term rentals (VRBO and AirBnBs). Staff revealed that there was no formalized method for determining primary residence and that there was a Staff-level interpretation made on how to handle a proposal for both a new house and new ADU built on a vacant lot. It seems the primary residence requirement is effectively being ignored by this interpretation policy. This was quite a surprise to members of the DRCA and is something that needs clarification to both staff and the community. We are concerned that lack of enforcement of the primary residence requirement will lead to the majority of ADUs being used as short-term rentals, or by a developer to build out the maximum envelope of a site pushing the sale price higher, rather than providing additional affordable housing. Learning that there is not a homeowner living on site to talk to about mis-use of the ADU degrades the quality of life for those living adjacent to the property. We realize that the ADU topic deserves discussion separate from the SUP proposal under review, and would like to request that it be addressed with a written response to the DRCA outlining the current enforcement of the code.

Sincerely,

Kristine Hesse, DRCA LUC Co-Chair
Lisa Lettieri, DRCA LUC Co-Chair

Katie Waynick
DRCA President

cc: Sam Shelby, P & Z
Rachel Drescher, P & Z
Eric Teran, Eustilus Architects

From: Mary Ellen <maryellen.file@yahoo.com>

Sent: Friday, December 29, 2023 4:43 PM

To: Rachel M Drescher <rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: Ann.Horiwitz@alexandriava.gov

Subject: [EXTERNAL]404 A East Alexandria Avenue

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my objection to the plan to build a house in an unbuildable lot at the above referenced address.

There are safety concerns as well as parking, and other issues. That lot has been a nice patch of "green space."

The Del Ray Citizens Association is against this as well as the Del Ray Citizens.

I feel sure that if this lot is safe and practical to build on, someone would have done so 100 or more years ago. My family goes back over 100 years in Del Ray and I have lived here for 80 of those years. I love this neighborhood.

What I am taking from this is that the least important factor in this decision is the people it affects , although I am sure you care about our tax money.

I am also disappointed that no one has responded to the concerns of the Citizens Association.

I ask you to please not approve this project.

Mary Ellen File

1401 Mount Vernon Avenue

Alexandria 22301

Please consider

From: Raj Singh <raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, December 24, 2023 5:52 PM

Cc: Rachel M Drescher <rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov>; Ann Horowitz <ann.horowitz@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: 404A E Alexandria Ave

Hi Rachel and Ann,

I'm writing, as the owner of 404 E Alexandria, Raj and Kim Singh, about the development behind our home. There is a reason it hasn't been built on all this time, and there is a real possibility three large mature trees will die. A 2500 fine or 2 inch tree replacement isn't an acceptable solution. In addition the house will alter the sun and shade to all existing homes.

I'm curious how will the construction equipment get to the site and where will it be stored? In addition, within Del Ray, I don't believe a home has been built with no street frontage, and the architecture of the home doesn't fit in with the area.

The owner is a well known individual who owns several properties and lists them as short term rental. While it's unknown if this will be a short term rental, one can take the available data and conclude it will be. This doesn't adhere to more housing for residents if only tourists are using it.

Two del ray committees stated no to building on this site, so it's also peculiar that city council would go against the advice given.

I'm available to talk.

Raj

From: Angela Rice riceangie@gmail.com

Sent: Wednesday January 3, 2024 4:52 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: SUP 2023-00076 404 A E. Alexandria Ave

I am writing to express my extreme opposition and OUTRAGE to the P&Z Staffs recommendation for approval for this substandard lot development. I live adjacent to the lot and am pro development in general, but when it is keeping with the characteristics and building pattern of the neighborhood. This proposed project meets neither. This proposed development of this non buildable taxed lot has been discussed and voted on by the Del Ray Land Use Committee, the DRCA and the immediate affected neighbors. In all cases, this is not what the neighbors or Del Ray community is supportive of. This is NOT a build by Right scenario.

It meets NONE of the minimum requirements for building approval under R-2-5 zoning.

- the undersized lot has NO STREET FRONTAGE and does not meet the frontage requirement
- it doesNOT have the minimum lot square foot size (2600 sqft v 5000 sqft)
- it doesNOT have the minimum width of the lot (45 v 50 FT required)
- it does not meet the open space requirement of 40% of the area of the lot as open and usable space

It will have a large negative impact to all of the immediate neighbors

- it will further exacerbate problematic flooding in this area. Historically Alexandria Ave Floods and this SubStandard lot with NO Street Frontage is at the low spot of the street.
- Where is the storm water retention? How will the storm water for this structure be managed? The large NEARLY LOT LINE TO LOT LINE basement (to work around FAR requirement) is not permeable. How will this water tie into the storm drain?

This SUP, if approved, will have a negative impact on Alexandria City and specifically the Del Ray Community. It is dangerous, as it will set a precedent for substandard lot development in the City. It will not matter what you do, there will be no way to stop further development of this type. Literally any lot is now deemed buildable and will cause considerable harm. Not every lot is a " buildable Lot". Some are simply left over plots. We have these today as well and they are generally deeded to an HOA as open space, NOT built on.

The proposal is misleading - For clarity, this is NOT affordable housing.

Mr Teran purchased the lot for \$200k because it is not a buildable lot.

A buildable lot in the Del Ray is \$850,000

Because of the site restrictions, it will cost a lot to develop and will not be anything close to affordable housing....Quite the contrary, because of the design, style and size the property will only really be paid for as an AirBnB.

I am very concerned, as a parent of three children, the youngest is a 7 yo that frequently skateboards, rollerblades and bikes around this block. I am extremely concerned about the safety of cars driving into the alley to access the lot and due to the inability to turn around, having to back out onto Mount Vernon Ave, across the sidewalk many of our children walk, bike and rollerblade along.....This alley was NEVER designed to be used in the manner being proposed...especially for multiple users. Again, the applicants have admitted that they have no intention of living in the home...Mr Teran and his wife claim they are simply building a long term rental property...even if we take them at their word, which I don't, there is NO policing of the AirBnB policy in place.

I am concerned as a person that also bikes and drives down that part of Mt Vernon Ave daily, there is no visual clearance for taking turns out of that alley and I am worried my car, bike or self will be hit.

I am extremely concerned about the owners using the two structures as AirBnBs. We do not need new renters constantly confused as to how to access these structures, as there is no street frontage and it is unsafe for cars to pull in/back out from that narrow alley with no visian clearance. There will be no one to police if the owners abide by the 120 day limit to AirBnB.

Addressing the parking on this block of E Alexandria. There is not ample street parking on E. Alexandria Ave in front of 404 E. Alexandria Ave or on Mt Vernon Ave adjacent to the alley (see photos from today). It is a daily struggle to park on either street. If the City Staff had made an attempt to speak with any of the affected neighbors they woul dhave come to this conclusion. It seems that in the Staffs almost " giddiness" to recommend approval, they intentionally didn't Talk to any of the neighbors.

I am concerned about the abject disregard for the over 100 year old beautiful, healthy tree (photo attached) on the property directly adjacent to the lot. The root ball will almost certainly be destroyed by the proposed basement construction and kill this tree which provides a significant amount of shading and windbreak to our property. The consequence for destruction of this tree is not sufficient. He would be required to plant a 2inch diameter tree to replace a 44 inch and approx 60 foot tree? This tree needs to be protected. The City arborist says there is a moderate chance the tree will live.....seriously?

This project was deferred until the new Zoning for All was enacted. Why? It's not falling under the new zoning....but was deferred until it was passed. The "giddiness" to recommend approval is glaring.

Housing should be for all, provided the housing is built on appropriate compatible sized lots, with appropriate and compatible design and not impair or potentially harm the surrounding current and future residents.

Again, This SUP is probably the easiest "NO" vote on an SUP that's ever come before this body.

Angela Rice, PT, DPT, NCPT

408 E. Alexandria Ave

Alexandria VA 22301

(703)868-3330





From: Catharine Rice catharine.rice@gmail.com

Sent: Wednesday January 3, 2024 8:37 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: SUP 2023-00076//Please do not approve

Please do not approve the SUP for 404A East Alexandria. Look closely at what the experienced representatives from the Del Ray Citizens Association have written you, which include red flags regarding the design, stormwater management, the FAR basement exclusion and setbacks, the impact of utility lines, the impact on neighboring trees, vision clearance at the alley entrances, use of the accessory dwelling unit as a short-term rental, and lack of emergency access.

I will focus on the two of these concerns. I live on this street and am very familiar with this tiny parcel. Construction here will be a blatant and obvious fire risk to all the townhouses that surround it. The applicant wants to build two buildings on what is about half the size of the parcels on this side of East Alexandria. Easily assumed as just a backyard area, this parcel is served by two small alleys that will not support a firetruck (or two), let alone one that needs to turn around. This is made obvious by the owner asking for a waiver of the two-parking spot requirement, because "The lot is difficult to pull in and out for two cars due to the narrow alley and existing conditions." The zoning staff's answer to this is to waive the fire code during construction. Not an answer. And the city would need to waive it after construction as well.

Here is what that alley entrance looks like from East Alexandria. You'll never fit a firetruck down that. Nor one that could ever turn around. Same from the Mt. Vernon alley.



Secondly, the plot is rife with utility lines which will require substantial repositioning, and the protection of a 100 plus year-old tree. Those big construction and utility trucks with no turning space, are going to back into that tree. No light stakes or light orange fencing will protect it. The owner only must pay a \$2500 fine and buy a 2" diameter tree. No problem. The loss is to the community.

Finally, why should the City bend all these rules, change the whole contour of an area used by residents who own their homes here, for an owner who has told us that they are building it just to lease it out (maybe use it when they retire), and to AirBnB the ADU? To me this translates into more disruption and impact on the people who actually own to live here, more of a fire hazard due to people with no land responsibility coming and going, and of course, more cars trying to park on E. Alexandria, which, contrary to what has been stated, does not have substantial on-street parking. This cannot be allowed under the aegis of promoting "affordable housing" because it is not what was intended.

I am speaking up because I fear this careless implementation of the SUP rules could set a precedent of not protecting the public interest in the use of our scarce green space. It will allow an abuse of the SUP process and a false rendering of what we intended for affordable housing. If you read the "conditions" under which the staff have recommended approval, it will force final building approval on our poor fire safety group, who will not stand up to the pressure of blocking a property owner from "building their house."

The owners bought this lot knowing it was not buildable. There is a reason the City has denied building on this land so many times in the past. Please go over to this parcel and see how small it is. It's not going to fit without long lasting disruption to those who have invested for years to live here.

Many thanks,

Catharine Rice

424 East Alexandria Avenue

From: [Singh, Raj](#)
To: [PlanComm](#); [Rachel M Drescher](#); [Ann Horowitz](#)
Cc: raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Special Use Permit #2023-00076 404A E Alexandria Avenue additional comments
Date: Wednesday, January 3, 2024 8:37:50 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

ALCON,

Following up on a previous email sent earlier.

Some concerns from the owners of 404 E Alexandria Ave, Raj and Kim Singh

1. Stormwater management. Approximately 60 to 70% of the home is underground. The lack of a street to run the water to will flood the yards and basements of seven plus homes
2. Lack of street frontage. The fire department does not have access, as it is not within the 100 feet requirement. Is the city waiving this? If the city is waiving this requirement, it places all existing neighbors at risk.
3. Lot size is approximately 2600 square feet (5000 required)
 - a. After researching, there are no under 5000 lots with **no** street frontage
 - b. Builders are watching to see how city council votes and will act accordingly
 - c. What precedent do you wish to set?
4. Lot width is 45 feet (50 required)
5. Project does not fit within the Del Ray character
 - a. No homes in Del Ray look like the one submitted
6. The additional unit (ADU) being built requires, by law, that the owner lives in the main unit. This, according to the owner, will not happen as he lives elsewhere.
7. DRCA, community and neighbors overwhelmingly rejected this proposal
 - a. Why go against the community?
8. Up to three large trees might die with absolutely no deterrent other than a small fine?
 - a. Not the Del Ray I know and love?
9. Owners other homes are STRs – building another STR, while allowed, does ZERO for affordable long-term rentals in our community

Appreciate the opportunity to provide additional comments prior to the meeting. I am against this build as it will directly affect my home and the surrounding community.

Raj Singh
Lt Col Kim McCoy-Singh

Raj Singh
Department of Homeland Security HQ
OFFICE: Microsoft Teams

MOBILE: 202.897.8175

e-mail: raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov

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From: Paula Kara paula@sfn.org
Sent: Wednesday January 3, 2024 9:03 PM
To: PlanComm
Subject: SUP 404A E Alexandria Avenue

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

As the owner of 1411 Mt. Vernon Avenue, I am writing to share several objections to the proposed SUP for 404A E Alexandria Avenue.

The lot size and accessing alleys are small. The alleys into the lot are narrow; as it is now, when the trash cans are out a car can't fit through. In case of emergency, fire trucks and ambulances would have difficulty accessing the home therefore creating a safety concern for multiple homes.

The construction would be a major disturbance to the neighbors. But, even after construction, there would be a permanent negative impact to ten or so households. Current homeowners may have to remove fences to allow for the required vision clearance and access to their homes may be impeded. The chance of flooding would increase with the displacement of soil. There could also be increased traffic to and from the house if it's used as an Airbnb property, as the lot owner has suggested, with renters and cleaning services.

While I understand the City's initiative to provide more affordable housing this is not an affordable housing option.

This would also set a precedent for more requests of the city to waive zoning regulations including the requirement for street frontage, minimum lot square footage and width, and the percentage of open space.

I highly urge members of the commission to visit the lot prior to making a decision as the presentation I've seen doesn't reflect how small the area is, and the permanent negative impact a new house on this lot would have on the neighborhood.

Again, I'm very strongly opposed to this proposal and ask that the commission not grant approval for one family that will forever negatively affect many others. I'm happy to answer any questions but am unfortunately not able to attend the hearing as I'll be out of town.

Sincerely,

Paula Kara

Owner: 1411 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301

Residence: 310 E. Windsor Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301

Phone: 703/307-7678

From: John Burdick john.cam.burdick@gmail.com

Sent: Thursday January 4, 2024 6:57 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Public Comments for Special Use Permit #2023-00076

City of Alexandria Planning Commission,

Residents: John C. Burdick & Dakota J. Chance

Address: [1409 Mount Vernon Ave, Alexandria VA, 22301](#)

Regarding: Special Use Permit #2023-00076 ([404A E Alexandria Avenue](#))

Comments: My wife Dakota and I bought our house in June 2022. We live here with our two sons, ages 2 and 3, and will welcome our third child in April, 2024. Dakota and I are both Active Duty Air Force. We purchased the property with high confidence we'll have many more assignments in the NCR given the close proximity of the Pentagon and surrounding bases. The house in Del Ray not only serves as a sound investment in our family's financial future but we had hoped it would provide a semblance of stability for our children. The kids of active duty service members are typically burdened with irregularly frequent moves to unfamiliar areas. Having a town house to return to, where my eldest learned to read and my second son learned to walk, would give them a sense of continuity not often afforded military dependents. The proposed build in the substandard lot behind our house changes the calculus for the following reasons:

1. The houses with street frontage that line Mt Vernon Ave are on a downhill slope from the vacant lot to the east. If a hardened structure is placed over what is currently grass and soil, lot line to lot line, the drainage during heavy rain could significantly increase the risk of basement flooding and water erosion to the surrounding properties.
2. Without street frontage, all food, parcel, and mail couriers would be expected to walk through an active alley way to make deliveries. This increases daily foot traffic in an alley that would no longer have any egress during low-visibility.
3. If 404A is constructed, it would be located outside the 100ft minimum distance of a fire hydrant. Presenting a clear fire hazard directly behind our home.

4. In addition to not meeting the minimum lot size, the current plan does not meet minimum frontage or open space zoning requirements. This detracts from the neighborhood's open aesthetic forcing a claustrophobic and cramped living environment for the 10 houses that encircle the property.
5. The main above-ground structure will be constructed directly behind our property and I fear it will block the morning sun from reaching our backyard.
6. Lastly, the main structure will be set only 17ft from our property with the ADU only 10ft from 404 E Alexandria. I have legitimate concerns that this will negatively impact the appeal of our property to future renters and/or buyers.

Bottom Line: I question the cost-benefit analysis of a decision that would give special permission for the benefit of a single-family home on a substandard lot to the detriment of the ten established Alexandria homes that surround it. When my wife and I purchased our home in 2022, which represents our family's single largest investment, we understood the land behind our house to be taxed as an unbuildable lot; substandard in size for a significant development such as what's proposed under Special Use Permit #2023-00076. We purchased our property with the confidence that current zoning statutes would be upheld and that whatever came of the property, it would not be a modern structure over 2,000sq/ft set only 10ft from our property line. For what it's worth, if the plan is approved, my wife and I would no longer consider retiring in this property, which would have been well suited for two empty nesters. The cramped construction, lack of accessibility, poor water drainage, blocked sunlight, and invasion of privacy from the unprecedented proximity would all play a role in this decision.

Very Respectfully,

John Burdick & Dakota Chance

Concerned Neighbors

[1409 Mount Vernon Ave](#)

Alexandria, VA 22301

From: Matthew Kaim matthewkaim@yahoo.com

Sent: Wednesday January 3, 2024 1:43 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Concerns over 404A East Alexandria

Hello All,

My name is Matt Kaim and I am the property owner of 1413 Mt Vernon Avenue, which is adjacent to the lot being considered for a SUP for 404A E Alexandria Avenue in Del Ray. I have owned this home since 2009.

I plan to be at the zoning meeting tomorrow (January 4), but wanted to send a few of my serious concerns with you in this e-mail.

- 1) The 2600 sq ft lot size is nearly 50% smaller than the required 5000 sq ft R-2-5 zone requirement, and the 45' width of the lot is less than the 50' required width
- 2) The proposed property does not meet the 100' or less emergency access requirement. This is a big risk to all surrounding homes, including mine. The 100' requirement was set for a reason.
- 3) My property, the lot in question, and surrounding properties are prone to severe flooding. My property already gets supersaturated quickly and floods due to underground springs around my property and my neighbors' properties. My backyard is the lowest point of all surrounding properties and the runoff/storm water from the proposed structures will worsen this flooding. There is no street for the runoff from the proposed structures to be guided to.
- 4) The project does not comply with the city's vision clearance requirements, making it very dangerous for pedestrians/and small children, which are oftentimes in the alleys.
- 5) Any car parked in the proposed parking spot would need to maneuver into my parking area in order to drive down the alley. This is not acceptable.
- 6) The City did not meet with any neighbors to discuss concerns provided to the City through the Del Ray Citizen's Association.
- 7) The alley from Mt Vernon does not provide the width/clearance for excavation/construction equipment, and attempts to bring that equipment down the alley will cause damage to my property, including trees and cars parked in my parking area.
- 8) The 2 story main building will not look like an accessory structure.
- 9) Parking on Mt Vernon, E Alexandria, and the block in general is very limited. There is no abundance of parking.
- 10) A low-pitch roof does not meet the character of Del Ray.

11) The 100+ year old tree will likely be killed by this project. This is unacceptable, as is the nominal \$200 fine for killing the tree.

12) The approval of this construction will set a very bad precedent for allowing developers to build structures otherwise out of code/zoning laws across Del Ray and Alexandria.

Please let me know if you have any questions or wish to discuss any of this before the meeting tomorrow.

Thank you.

Matt Kaim

703-731-3782

From: Tom VanAntwerp tom@tomvanantwerp.com

Sent: Wednesday January 3, 2024 2:54 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Resident comments on docket items 5 and 6

I'm writing to express my views regarding docket item 5 (service station at Monroe and Mount Vernon Ave, Special Use Permit #2023-00097) and docket item 6 (404A E Alexandria, Special Use Permit #2023-00076).

I am against the extension of the SUP for the service station. The dual curb cuts for the service station on both Mount Vernon and Monroe make it treacherous for pedestrians walking by it on any side. It contributes to danger to pedestrians on Mount Vernon Ave, a street mostly geared toward pedestrian-friendly commercial. This service station contributes to making Monroe a busier street than it ought to be, creating a hazardous divide between north and south ends of Del Ray. This service station exists in contradiction to the aims of the Mount Vernon Avenue Area Business Plan. A 20 year extension of this SUP locks the neighborhood into a poor allocation of this land, which doesn't well serve the actual residents versus those driving through. I encourage you to not support this SUP.

I am for the SUP for 404A E Alexandria. I live very near to the lot in question, and it has always perplexed me why that land stood empty. Putting a new home there would be an excellent addition to the neighborhood.

Thank you for taking the time to review my comments.

Best,

Tom VanAntwerp

Resident, Del Ray

From: [Joseph Marfori](#)
To: [Ann Horowitz](#); [PlanComm](#); [Rachel M. Drescher](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP concerns for 404a e Alexandria ave
Date: Thursday, January 4, 2024 3:07:02 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from josephmarfori@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Special Use Permit Committee,

Please note my concerns against the approval of aberrant, non-compliant SUP for the vacant lot at 404a East Alexandria Avenue. I ask that you not approve the requested exemptions for the following reasons.

- 1) We have had extensive flooding on this block that will be worsened due to the decrease in absorbable land. There seems to be natural river just underground the proposed location and the hardened structure will cause the water to divert into the street, already overtaxed drains, and nearby houses.
- 2) There is a lack of street parking in front of 404 E. Alexandria since no street frontage exists. The nearby streets are full almost every night already with the existing residents and during the daytime these spots fill up with metro and restaurant patrons.
- 3) The proposed access is blind, dangerous stretch of sidewalk and alleyway alley into Mt vernon ave that kids from the street and nearby middle school use regularly. The severely limited sight lines endangers our children's safety and is even more so considering the intent to have multiple short term renters in multiple proposed structures.
- 4) The overall design is not fitting with the neighborhood and sets a design precedence that will cause builders to subdivide existing lots without street frontage and make the neighborhood less appealing through clutter.
- 5) The proposed variance for fire code endangers the neighborhood by being too far from fire hydrants and more importantly does not allow enough room for emergency vehicles. Although the plot is claimed to support a fire truck the actual width and angles of the alley access will NOT allow safe operations in an emergency. If safety vehicles cannot access this address promptly it endangers lives and the physical structures nearby. If this is approved, the City would be liable for any delay to care or property damage for knowingly approving a non-conforming structure.

I hope you see that the proposed SUP is a bad idea on top of a worse idea. Please do not approve this potentially dangerous variance.

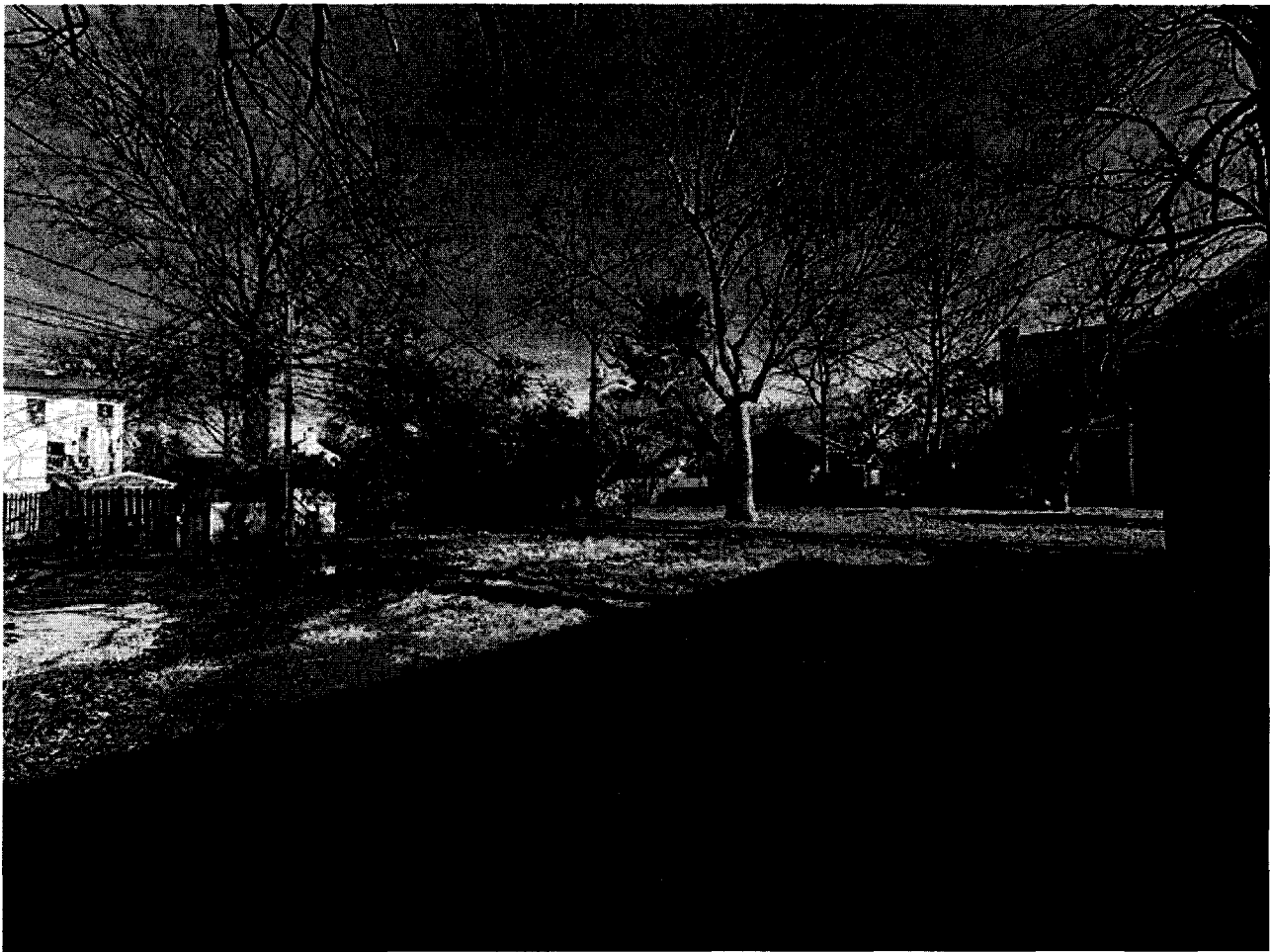
Respectfully submitted,

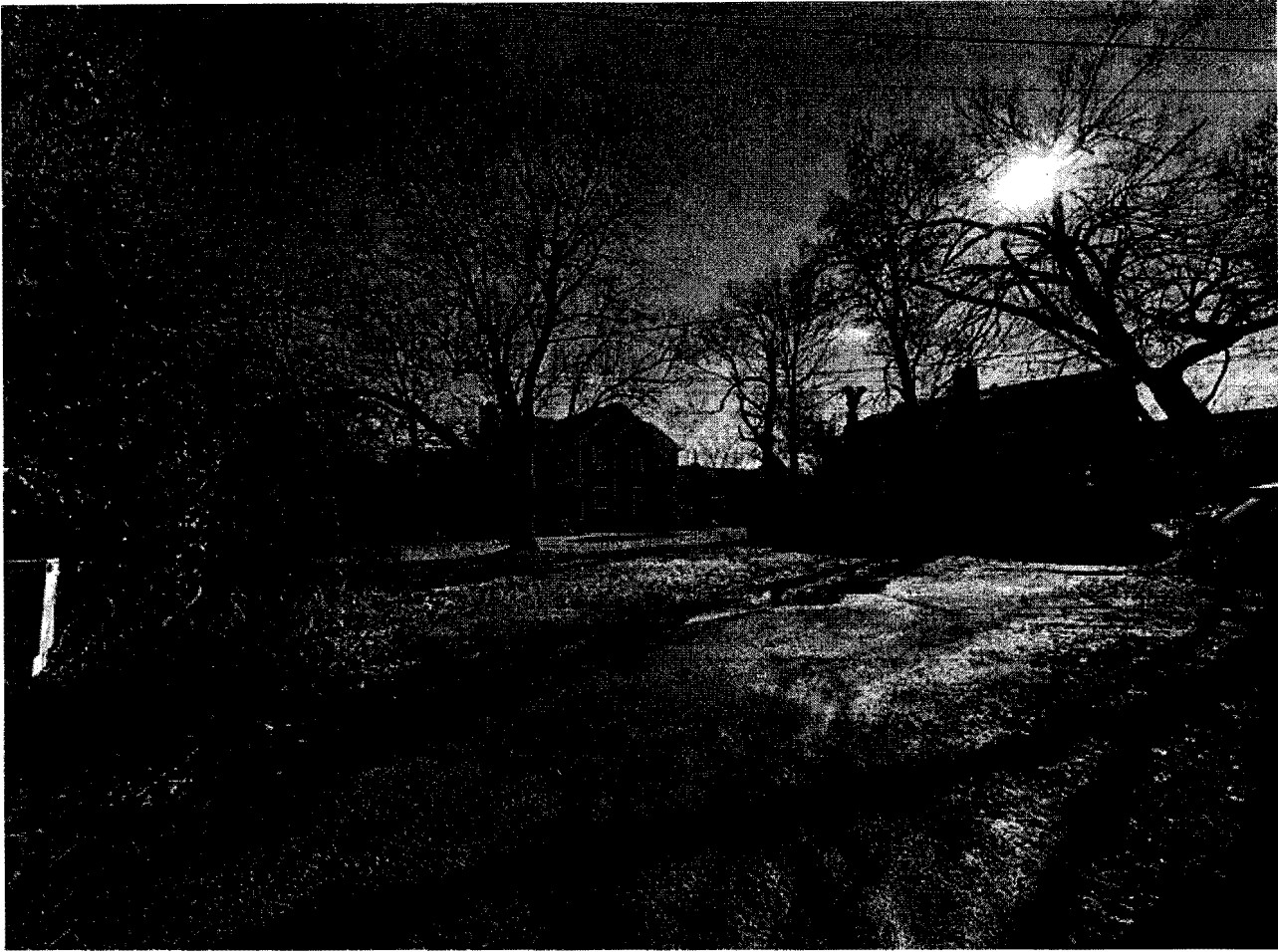
Joseph Marfori, MD FACEP
409 E Alexandria Ave

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DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.
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Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your continued service representing the best interests of our community. Change is not easy, particularly for a city with extensive historical roots, and as you steer our City through Northern Virginia's growth, I remain proud of your leadership in ensuring that Alexandria maintains a healthy and inclusive community.

The health of our community has embodied a personal obligation to contribute through community service. To date, I have volunteered over 400 hours to the Alexandria Health Department's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team. This includes weekends supporting and supervising: annual mass influenza vaccination events, several COVID-19 mass testing events, large COVID-19 vaccine clinics that immunized over a thousand community members to smaller clinics in neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic, and pediatric vaccine clinics. I also volunteered at the Health Department's COVID-19 call center and as a COVID-19 contract tracer and case investigator. These opportunities gave me a unique opportunity to cross paths with other Alexandrians from different walks of life, and I have left every event prouder of being a resident of this City.

However, I am writing to express my disappointment at the lack of community engagement or consideration by the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Alexandria Planning Commission on the application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Avenue. I only learned about changes in the original application through public filings of the final document, interpreting these documents as a non-subject matter expert with other impacted neighbors, and attending the Planning Commission meeting on January 4, 2024. Beyond these filings and forum, we were never given an opportunity to learn about changes, exchange concerns, or explore alternatives with the City Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant, even though my residence and those of my neighbors would be negatively affected by this new single-family residence with a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit.

This lengthy letter seems to be the last opportunity for community-level input. The first and only opportunity for dialogue was hosted by the Del Ray Citizen Association (DRCA), which did its job in allowing for deliberation and voting in opposition to this SUP (re. letter sent to Mr. Moritz, Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning). But, instead of following up with DRCA's letter and those of my neighbors, the Department of Planning and Zoning responded through a final report that recommended approval of the SUP permit. Not only did their official report not address the significant concerns in those letters, it only raised more questions. We only wished for dialogue and the Planning and Zoning Staff didn't respond to our requests. Adding to the sting was that we first learned about adaptations at the Planning Commission meeting, after the Staff filed their report and recommendations.

I am in full agreement with my neighbor's and DRCA's concerns and since there is no other opportunity for dialogue with the Planning and Zoning Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant. I am presenting my main concerns through this letter and hopefully as verbal testimony to you, as our City Council.

- Firstly, our residences are part of the Hooffs Run Watershed that sit on-top of underground streams that drain into the very-active Hooffs Run. Most of the recent flooding events, specifically those off Monroe Avenue and off Commonwealth Avenue in the Rosemont Neighborhood, are associated with our watershed. The streams immediately underneath and surrounding our residences have not been disturbed since our multi-unit townhomes were built in the late 1930's with sump pumps being a necessity. My sump pump routinely runs multiple

times during dry periods and almost continuously during rain and snow events. It also takes several days for the large “puddles” on the 404A E Alexandria lot to absorb into the ground after a modest rain event, confirming that the soil is already water-logged by active streams with little capacity for additional run-off. Building a solid structure that runs to the edge of the lot with a predominantly underground footprint will stress these active sub-terrain streams. Since our townhomes are below 404A E Alexandria, it is highly likely that the streams will be diverted and focused into our basements if the proposed building is constructed. My own sump pump is unlikely to handle increased demand and I would predict that putting in a single-family home at 404A E Alexandria could make the surrounding ten homes unlivable given their age and cost for reinforced infrastructure.

- Secondly, the only vehicular access to the proposed unit is through a small public alley off Mount Vernon Avenue. Approving this permit will increase the danger to our immediate community by converting a lightly-used alleyway into an active vehicular thoroughfare. Driving onto Mount Vernon Avenue from this alley means that the driver must first cross an active sidewalk connecting the Braddock Road Metro Station, GW Middle School, and the rest of Alexandria to Del Ray’s “downtown” core. Then, the driver must carefully navigate onto Mount Vernon Avenue after passing parked cars at the edge of the alley entrance, with additional effort that car and bicycle cross-traffic is aware given that the entrance is not obvious (as it is in the middle of the block) or visible from the street. There have been several occasions of cars blocking the alley because visitors thought it was a viable parking spot. The City’s refuse, recycling, and compost collection staff also will not attempt to drive down the alley and instead service our townhomes by parking on Alexandria Avenue and walking down the alley. The detached Accessory Dwelling Unit described in the SUP application has its own dedicated kitchen and laundry in addition to those within the main building, elevating concern that the proposed construction is for two separately-resided buildings. This alley and its intersection with the sidewalk and Mount Vernon Avenue is not designed for the likely increased traffic pressure introduced by two new family units at 404A E Alexandria and regular services such as Amazon or other delivery providers.
- Most shockingly, during verbal testimony provided by the staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning at the Planning Commission meeting, one significant justification for their final recommendation was based on the proposed goals of Zoning For Housing/Housing For All (ZFH). My love of the diversity and inclusivity of this City should show that I am in full support of ZFH and I applaud the Council’s leadership on this issue. However, the residence described in the application for this SUP does not address the vision as it is proposed as a single-family residence (although this counters the design, as mentioned above) that the applicant testified is intended to be a rental. If these are rented, I highly doubt these will be offered at sub-market rental rates as this is not described anywhere. The intended use and design of these buildings are not the model that should represent the vision of ZFH and it is insincere to make that claim. I remain disappointed that these City Staff wanted to distract the lack of substance in their report by politicizing an issue unrelated to this SUP application.

Our family focused our housing search on Alexandria when we were moving back to this region after several years in Seattle. After living in eight different cities, Alexandria is the only city I have ever wanted to put down roots, a commitment that resulted in the purchase of our first home. The past five years have been nothing but amazing, including new routines of weekend walks throughout Alexandria’s diverse neighborhoods, enjoying the multitude of cuisines from Old Town and Arlandria to the West End,

and partaking in multiple events, festivals, farmer's markets, and local theater. We typically find ourselves comparing Alexandria during our vacations, often to the detriment of the cities we're visiting.

As you review this SUP application and my comments, I also ask the City Council to recognize that this review process lacked transparency and community engagement, with concerns filed by my neighbors and DRCA remaining unaddressed. This process has been disappointingly frustrating, and I am speaking as a resident who loves Alexandria and the community represented by its residents and dedicated civil servants.

Again, thanks for this opportunity to voice my concerns. I welcome a call, email, or opportunity to meet if you have any questions about the content of this letter or want to learn more about my concerns about this application or the lack of transparency and engagement in its review.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (with Yashin Lin)

1407 Mt Vernon Ave

markdlim@gmail.com

10
1-20-24

3 Minute Speaker Outline:

I wish to express my opposition to the Special Use Permit at 404A E Alexandria Avenue (SUP #2023-00076, Docket #10 at the Jan 20th, 2024 City council meeting) and encourage you to vote against this SUP.

This SUP is in violation of City Building Code and is not consistent with street, neighborhood, or City building styles.

ADU without primary residence

Dramatically uncharacteristic lot size, width, and frontage

Nonconformity with Del Ray Neighborhood Residential Pattern Book

This SUP is not consistent with Zoning for Housing / Housing for All (Z4H/H4A).

There has not been sufficient outreach and discussion with the immediately impacted neighbors.

This construction on this lot will be exceptionally difficult and potentially dangerous to complete.

10
1-20-24

January 18th, 2023

RE:
City Council Public Hearing
Docket No. 10

Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers,

I am the owner and Architect for the vacant lot at 404A East Alexandria Ave. My family and I moved to Alexandria twelve years ago. For the first few years, and then in 2017 we built a house in the West End of Alexandria, and now we saw this opportunity to continue our investment and involvement in this community.

We are here for a Special Use Permit to confirm that this is a buildable lot. It has never been classified as a non-buildable lot. No previous owner has ever had a hearing to determine if it is buildable or not. The lot was created in 1931 as a legal lot. When it was created there was to be a street built along the east property line called Fourth St. For some reason this street was never built and throughout the last 90 years, the zoning regulations have changed. However, since it was created legally, this may be determined to be a buildable lot with the approval of this SUP.

The SUP is requesting three things:

1. Build on a sub-standard lot,
2. Reduce the required two parking spaces to one parking space.
3. Build on a lot with no street frontage,

SUB-STANDARD LOT

The latest zoning restriction for a lot in the R2-5 zone requires a lot to be 5,000 square feet and this lot is 2,661 square feet. As can be seen on page three of our presentation the adjacent lots range between 1,200 square feet and 9,600 square feet. This is common throughout the Del Ray neighborhood. The 2,661 square feet lot falls within the characteristics of this neighborhood.

REDUCE PARKING

This lot allows the space for two off-street parking spaces. However, the Transportation and Environmental Services (TES) suggested we request reduced parking due to the proximity of the bus and metro lines in the enhanced transit area. Due to their suggestions, we requested reduced parking for only one off-street parking. We don't believe this is an issue as in December of 2023 TES reduced the requirements to zero parking spaces required for homes within the enhanced transit areas.

NO STREET FRONTAGE

This is a unique lot within the Del Ray neighborhood and the city of Alexandria. Pages one and two of our presentation show only sixteen (16) vacant properties within the city that are classified as

residential, not owned by the city, not being used as a parking lot, or owned by the adjacent neighbor. Of those vacant lots, only three have no street frontage. The approval of this SUP will not set a precedent.

The neighbor's concerns on this subject are as follows:

1. Where will a delivery driver park? If they park on Mt. Vernon Ave it is in the same condition as the houses on that street as none of those homes have driveways. We can also recommend that they park on E. Alexandria Ave. which has more curb space. The approval of this SUP will not adversely impact this existing condition.
2. What will the vision clearance be for cars pulling out of an alley? This is an existing condition that the homes at 1411 and 1413 Mt. Vernon Ave must conform to. As seen in the site photos this has been maintained properly. In addition, three cars already park in this alley regularly. This SUP is only adding one car. The approval of this SUP will not adversely impact this existing condition.
3. How is this compatible if there are no alley lots in this area? Compatibility does not mean aesthetics. This is not part of the discussion for this SUP as this is not required to go in front of the Board of Architectural Review. What compatibility means in this unique case is if the R2-5 zoning bulk regulations are met. The massing conforms to all development standards such as setbacks, height restrictions, FAR, and other R2-5 zoning requirements. Even with these restrictions that are meant for larger lots, we were able to provide a creative solution to show that a home is feasible to occupy this lot. By adhering to the zoning bulk regulations the approval of this SUP will not adversely impact this neighborhood.

I believe we have met the requirements to show that these three requests for a sub-standard lot, reduced parking, and no street frontage are acceptable and this SUP may be approved.

Now that we have addressed the issues with the SUP, I want to respond to the neighbor's concerns with the building permits and construction process. We have taken these comments seriously and made numerous design decisions based on these comments.

I mailed letters to all twelve adjacent neighbors at the end of October that we were holding a meeting at the lot on November 2nd to show them the proposed plans, 3D images, and to view the project in virtual reality. The letter provided my email and phone number in case someone was not able to attend so that we could arrange an additional meeting at the site or through Zoom. Seven neighbors attended from five of the homes. One neighbor who could not attend and rents their house emailed me and we communicated through email.

These were their concerns at that meeting and how we moved forward.

1. The owner of 1409 Mt. Vernon Ave (lot 25 on page 14 of our presentation) uses the alley to drive to their rear yard and park their car. The design does not propose a fence along this side yard and provides pervious paving for 7' on the lot so that they can use this space to maneuver

into their rear yard. This is not a requirement and is done solely for the benefit of these homeowners.

2. The Silver Maple tree is beloved by the neighborhood and they do not want to see it gone. We agree. In the initial design, the basement extended to the east property line which would have killed the tree's root system. After hearing the neighbor's concerns and speaking to the city's landscape architect we hired a certified arborist to tell us what was possible to develop on this lot without causing harm to the tree. On pages 32 and 33 of our presentation, their report and plans are detailed. The Silver Maple is labeled as tree 1 east of the lot. The structural root zone (SRZ) is 22' from the trunk. There were two options. The first was to remove the tree and pay a \$2,500 fine and the second was to redesign the basement. We heard the neighbor's concerns and revised the basement plan as shown on page 15 of our presentation. The exterior and interior walls are an additional foot from the SRZ. By making this change the house loses 240 square feet of livable space. Even though the house has lost monetary value we moved forward with this decision. We will protect the Silver Maple.
3. How will the new house affect the light and air on the adjacent properties? A shading study was provided as shown on pages 27 to 29 of our presentation. The study shows the conditions at the winter and summer solstice. This study does not consider any of the existing trees. The only time the proposed house causes shading to a few rear yards along Mount Vernon Ave. is in the morning of the winter solstice. This is possible because the massing of the house conforms to all zoning bulk regulations such as the numerous setbacks, height restrictions, and is located to the north of most of the properties.
4. How the electrical wires that run over the lot be affected? Following the meeting, we reached out to Dominion to understand our options. We have spoken with Mr. Williams of Dominion who stated that they will provide a design to remedy the situation, however, they require a \$1,500 deposit to start, and the construction should be done within six months of the final design. If the SUP is approved this will be the first item to be undertaken so that any wires will be moved before construction starts.

On November 7th we presented our design and some of these changes to the Del Ray Citizen Association (DRCA). At this meeting, we recognized that there were three additional items of concern.

1. How will this development affect the stormwater? Per TES any new construction cannot increase the burden of runoff water. There are two strategies that the city accepts. The first is if the property is less than 100' from the street then a direct connection may be made to the stormwater drain and the second is to provide a catch basin on the property. Either of these options will either improve or maintain the status quo of stormwater runoff. The proposed roofs equal 890 square feet which will be drained directly to the storm drain or the catch basin. The 396 square foot green roof above the basement will drain directly to the storm drain or catch basin. The rest of the 1,375 square foot lot will be softscape and allow for percolation. Any water draining near the house will flow to the sump pump and drain to the stormwater system or catch basin. This will be designed by a licensed civil engineer and approved by TES.

2. How will the fire department access the house? The fire department reviewed the plans and is aware that the front door is 107' from the curb, which is more than the 100' allowed. A code modification will be required and may be offset by providing fire sprinklers and one or two hour fire rated materials. This will have to be addressed during the building permit phase. In looking at other houses along E. Alexandria Ave. and the Del Ray neighborhood there are numerous instances where garage or accessory dwelling units have been built which are much further than 100' from the street curb. For example, the house at 408 E. Alexandria Ave. has a garage and ADU almost 150' from the street curb. This structure can be seen in photo 3 on page 9 of our presentation.
3. Finally, how is our design aesthetics relatable to Del Ray housing? As stated at the beginning this is not a requirement to determine if this is a buildable lot. In theory, the house could be all glass or a concrete box. There is no Architectural Design Review required and this is not in a historic district.

Even though that is the case we did take into consideration the fabric of Del Ray and how it has progressed throughout the last 200 years. This is a modern take on what could come next. New construction is not supposed to copy or mimic a style. Rather it is to compliment what has come before. According to the DRCA they recognize seven styles of houses within the Del Ray Neighborhood. This doesn't even take into consideration all the other styles for commercial or multi-family buildings.

Those styles are as follows and what inspiration we took from them:

- a. Italianate, 1840 – 1885, Full-width front porch,
- b. Queen Anne, 1880 – 1910,
- c. Folk Victorian, 1780 – 1910, Simple front doors and roof form,
- d. Craftsman Bungalow, 1905 – 1930, asphalt shingles on gable roof and wood siding,
- e. Colonial Revival, 1880 – 1955, rectangular shape, brick, multi-pane glazing,
- f. American Foursquare, 1900 – 1930, full-width front porch
- g. Tudor Revival, 1890 - 1940

This lot is adjacent to two very different styles of architecture. Colonial row homes along Mt. Vernon Ave and oversized Craftsman Bungalow homes for the west half of E. Alexandria Ave and then typical Craftsman Bungalows on the east half.

This house complements both styles by using certain features. This can be seen on page 41 of our presentation. For example, brick siding was used to complement the homes along Mt. Vernon Ave, but we also integrated wood-like fiber cement siding to visually appeal to the homes along E. Alexandria Ave. A few more features are the rectangular shape, the gable roof, the porch steps, and the multi-pane glazing.

This is a new construction which should be a product of its own time and not a replica of a historic past. Once again, we made changes to the design and asked the DRCA if we could present again. However, they denied this request on November 13th.

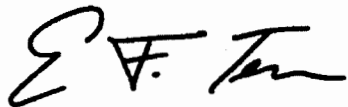
On January 4th we presented our SUP application to the Planning Commission and were approved 4 to 3. I believe the three commissioners who did not approve did not do so due to the proposal but that they wished we had done more neighbor outreach and suggested we defer the voting. I believe we did reach out to the neighbors as I have explained, we were open to communication and made numerous design changes based on their concerns.

Seven speakers spoke in opposition to our SUP, however, we only spoke to two beforehand even though the rest had my phone number and email. One of those neighbors is the owner of 1409 Mt. Vernon Ave., and as mentioned above we adjusted our design so that they can still park their car in their rear yard. We were surprised that they were now in opposition because, after our neighbor outreach meeting on November 2nd, they were happy that we thought of them and their needs. The other neighbor that we spoke to is the owner of 408 E. Alexandria Ave. which is the house furthest away. We have spoken to him three times while we visited the site and each time, he told us that we will never have anything approved on this lot, that no one will support it, that nothing will ever be built, and this lot is unbuildable. It is difficult to work with a neighbor if they want nothing built.

Zoning for Housing was recently approved 7 to 0 on November 28th, 2023 to expand Alexandria's housing production, improve affordability, and address past and current barriers to equitable housing access. As stated in the Zoning for Housing single-family homes do not mandate them to be affordable to specific income levels. This home will address the housing production portion of Zoning for Housing on an existing legally created vacant lot.

We believe that this SUP application meets all the requirements for a sub-standard lot with no street frontage and reduced parking. We believe we reached out to the neighbors and made numerous design changes to address their concerns. We believe that there are very few vacant lots left in the city of Alexandria and this is a creative solution to add much needed housing to the city.

Sincerely,



Eric F. Teran
Architect, LEED AP BD+C
202-569-9620
eteran@eustilus.com

10
1-20-24

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Elizabeth Schaefer <elizabeth.m.schaefer@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 1:26 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: Rachel M Drescher; Karl Moritz; Tony LaColla; Sam Shelby; Will Xmas
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Public Hearing 1/20- 404A Letter of Support

Some people who received this message don't often get email from elizabeth.m.schaefer@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

RE:
City Council Public Hearing
Docket No. 10

Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers,

I write as a resident of the 200 block of E. Alexandria Avenue, a client of Eustilus Architecture, and also, as a friend with insight into the character of the Teran-Gross family.

My husband and I have lived in Del Ray for over 10 years. What brought us here was the sense of community and charm of the neighborhood. As we hoped, our neighbors here have felt like a co-op, a village, and at times, a family. We have enjoyed sharing Del Ray with Eric and Daniela, residents of West Alexandria. They've joined us for the Halloween Parade, Art on the Avenue, and caroling on Luray/ Christmas Card Lane, as well as multiple family parties with the neighbors.

Daniela and Eric are exactly the kind of community-minded people that we moved to Del Ray to have as neighbors. They first came into our lives through Fairlington Preschool as Covid hit. When four families bubbled to create a homeschool, the Teran-Gross family quickly said that they would host and turned their space into an outdoor preschool for a year. Through the years, any time that we have needed help, whether it's home maintenance, birthday parties, or childcare, Daniela and Eric have been the first to show up. It is the very core of who they are. Although owning in Del Ray, as a resident or landlord, does not require any level of participating, in my in-depth experience with them, I can promise that they will be stand-out neighbors, taking excellent care of their property and willing listeners to neighbor's concerns, as I believe that they've already demonstrated in this process.

As I stated, we've also had the privilege to work with Eustilus in a professional setting. As our family grew to five, we considered moving to another area, but opted for a major renovation. Through this process, I had the opportunity to see the professional side of our friends. They take great pride in their work, are deeply knowledgeable about architecture and design, well-oriented to building in the city of Alexandria, and were honest, upfront, and open-minded as we navigated the bumpy road of renovation. When we first met with Eric, I told him that the house should maintain the character of the neighborhood which is mainly craftsman bungalow

homes. Through thoughtful design and listening to our needs Eric was able to design a home that met all our aspirations. Even though the home expanded in size, it complements the nearby homes allowing a seamless transition from one neighbor to the next. With knowledge and interest in green architecture, Eric also designed our home in a way that minimized our carbon footprint and maintained maximum green space. With our home now remodeled, we have no plans of leaving the Del Ray area anytime soon.

Although the house that Eustilus designed at 404A E. Alexandria Ave would not be my first choice for the style of a home in this area, the process has demonstrated the thoughtfulness and community-mindedness that I've always known them for. Since the property does not front Mt. Vernon Ave. or E. Alexandria Ave, they've made intentional considerations that it blend in size, height, and color, as well as protecting the beautiful tree on the adjacent property. I appreciate how they used certain features from the various styles of Del Rey houses and incorporated them into the design. It doesn't copy but enhances these features into today's architecture. Most developers would not have made such thoughtful decisions. It is a unique style, but it is also a unique lot.

Eric and his team have been considerate and thoughtful in providing a design that fits within the zoning regulations. My sense is that the concerns are less about how the lot will be developed and more aggravation that the lot exists at all. The lot does exist, however, and the Teran-Gross family has continued to follow all the correct procedures to make it livable, something no one else has been able to do while the city scrambles for increased housing. Part of choosing Del Ray over an HOA community has been the trust that our neighbors will be respectful, caring, and community-minded in their decisions. Eric and Daniela are, in every interaction over the past 4 years, all of those things. We can only hope that they feel welcome and will make the long-term decision to join our community themselves when their family is ready.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Schaefer
213 E. Alexandria Ave

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10
1-20-24

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Pete Balas <pbalas312@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 2:43 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: Rachel M Drescher; Karl Moritz; Tony LaColla; Sam Shelby
Subject: [EXTERNAL]City Council Public Hearing Docket No. 10

Some people who received this message don't often get email from pbalas312@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers,

I have lived in Alexandria City for seven years and worked in Alexandria city for twenty+ years. I have been neighbors with the applicants, Eric Teran and Daniela Gross since 2017. I saw them build their house on a vacant lot and it went smoothly and was built quickly. The house was a great addition to the neighborhood. I'm excited to hear that they are investing in Alexandria by buying another vacant lot and trying to build a home.

As we all know, there is an extreme housing shortage in Alexandria. Any opportunity to create new housing while respecting the zoning regulations should be applauded. My understanding is that this special use permit application requests three exceptions which are a sub-standard lot, reduced parking, and no street frontage. While this may not be common the presentation shows that the proposed home respects the zoning bulk regulations and is considerate to the neighbors.

I'm in full support of this special use permit being approved.

Sincerely,
Peter Balas
5445 Fillmore Ave.

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10
1-20-24

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Dave Hellman <lazlodaddy@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 6:24 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Letter in support of SUP2023-00076, docket item 24-1760

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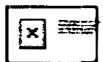
This letter supports the proposed development as summarized in SUP2023-00076, docket item 24-1760.

We reside at 407 E Nelson Avenue and the front of the main structure documented in this application directly faces our backyard. From our perspective, the building to be constructed on this lot is consistent with other structures in the immediate area, including our own. Although the application may not be fully compliant with the Zoning Ordinance, its size and parking needs seem consistent with other exceptions that have been made for nearby properties. For example, the neighboring home at 408 E Alexandria has a curb cut on city property that the owner uses for parking. 408 E. Alexandria also has an outbuilding that is the same size as the main structure in this proposal. This outbuilding also blocks an alley at the northeast corner of the parcel. We have no objections to these exceptions at 408 E. Alexandria or those made for any of the other nearby properties. There has been **a lot** of development and improvements on this block. We therefore feel it is fair and consistent for the same consideration to be applied to this new dwelling.

We appreciate that the applicant specifically reached out multiple times to us and our neighbors to keep us informed of their intentions. We welcome the potential of new neighbors in our immediate area and the diversity in housing this proposal offers.

Thank you for considering our opinion in your deliberation and for your service to our city.

Mr. and Mrs. David Hellman
407 E. Nelson Ave



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10
1-20-24

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Amalea Hajar <ahijar@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 6:44 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: Rachel M Drescher; Karl Moritz; Tony LaColla; Sam Shelby
Subject: [EXTERNAL]City Council Public Hearing, Docket No. 10

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ahijar@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers,

I am writing in support of the SUP to build a home on the currently vacant lot located at 404A E. Alexandria Avenue. Since purchasing my first home—a condo in Auburn Village—in 2006, I have witnessed the transformation of Del Ray and the City of Alexandria. I am not only an Alexandria homeowner, but also a business owner and member of the Del Ray Business Association. My husband's business is also based in Alexandria, in North Old Town, where we own additional property. Del Ray is a special gem in the DMV, but one that has become increasingly out of reach for many to not only play and work in, but also live. In fact, none of our employees live in Alexandria. Of course, the Council is aware of our housing challenges, and it's why the Zoning for Housing proposal passed unanimously in November.

It is in that same spirit that I support this SUP. In reviewing the application, I see a modest home, with a design that is thoughtful and considerate of its neighbors, on a typical-sized lot for the neighborhood. This is a great opportunity to convert a vacant lot into a beautiful home, allowing us to welcome new neighbors and make the dream of homeownership in Alexandria a reality for them.

Sincerely,

Amalea Hajar
Owner
3C Auburn Ct and 801 N. Pitt St

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From: Yashin yashin5@gmail.com

Sent: Tuesday November 7, 2023 3:13 PM

To: Rachel M Drescher <rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov>; landuse@delraycitizen.net

Subject: Special Use Permit for 404-A East Alexandria Ave

Dear Ms. Drescher and the DRCA Land Use Committee,

We live and own one of the properties surrounding 404A East Alexandria Ave, the property for which there has been a Special Use Permit application. We would like to express our concern regarding the plans for this property.

Our concerns:

- 1) **Neighborhood character** the plans are completely inconsistent with the character of the neighbourhood, including in lot size and style.
- 2) **Safety:** Since the proposed construction would have no street frontage, there would be reduced access to emergency and fire services, as the alleyway does not provide enough width for a fire engine to get through. Currently, city workers must walk into the alley for trash pickup because the alley is so narrow. If that house were to catch fire, it would definitely endanger all surrounding houses.
- 3) **Electricity service implications:** Construction would also impact the electric lines that run overhead through the lot, and how this would be resolved is unclear.
- 4) **Reduced lighting in surrounding houses:** The proposed house would reduce natural lighting to the back of the houses on E Alexandria and Mount Vernon that currently surround the lot.
- 5) **Tree** Plan execution would certainly require damaging the root system of a large tree at the edge of the lot that is on city property, effectively killing it.
- 6) **Safety:** Car access to the proposed construction would be through the alley that runs from Mount Vernon to East Alexandria. The alley has poor vision clearance since it was meant for infrequent traffic.

In short, we are strongly against the proposed construction and hope our concerns are heard.

Sincerely

Yashin Lin and Mark Lim

1407 Mount Vernon Ave

Alexandria VA 22301

From: Alicia Montgomery <lishmo.202@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 1:17 PM
To: Antoine D Pierce <antoine.pierce@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Opposition to SUP2023-00076

Dear Mr. Pierce,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the granting of a Special Use Permit for the construction of a new home in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia. While I appreciate the need for development and growth, I believe that the proposed plans for this new home do not align with the character of our neighborhood and raise several significant concerns that need to be addressed.

1) Incompatibility with the Neighborhood Character:

The proposed plans for the new home do not conform to the character of our neighborhood. It lacks street frontage, which is an essential element of Del Ray's aesthetic, and does not meet the minimum lot-size standards for new builds. This nonconformity could potentially set a precedent for other out-of-character developments, threatening the overall charm and appeal of the neighborhood.

2) Harm to Surrounding Trees:

The construction of this new home could potentially harm the mature trees that surround the build site. Overhead branches and the root structure of these trees may be adversely affected, leading to long-term damage or loss of our precious green canopy. Preserving our trees is vital for the well-being of our neighborhood and its residents.

3) Reduction of Natural Light and Light Pollution:

The new construction could result in a reduction of natural light available to the surrounding homes. This would not only diminish the quality of life for current residents but also add to light pollution, disrupting the serenity of our micro-neighborhood at night. We cherish the peacefulness and natural beauty of our area and wish to protect it.

4) Safety Concerns:

The proposed development may hinder access for fire engines and emergency medical services in the event of emergencies. This could put residents at risk and decrease response times, which is a crucial safety concern that cannot be overlooked.

5) Impact on Electric Lines:

The construction may have an adverse impact on the electric lines to surrounding homes, potentially leading to power outages or disruptions in the neighborhood. The reliability of utility services is essential for residents, and we must ensure that this is not compromised.

6) Negative Impact on Property Values:

The construction of a new home that does not conform to the neighborhood's standards and character could negatively affect property values in the surrounding area. This, in turn, could have financial repercussions for homeowners who have invested in the community.

I urge you to carefully consider these concerns and take into account the well-being and interests of the residents of Del Ray and the micro-community that this project impacts directly. I respectfully request that you deny the Special Use Permit for the proposed new home until a more suitable and harmonious plan can be developed.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. I trust that you will make decisions that are in the best interests of our beloved Del Ray neighborhood and its residents.

Sincerely,

Alicia Montgomery, owner-resident

406 E. Alexandria Ave

Alexandria, VA 22301

phone 202-689-9617



Nov. 20, 2023

Karl W. Moritz, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
City Hall, Room 2100
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: SUP2023-00076
404A E. Alexandria Ave

Dear Mr. Moritz,

At the Nov. 8 membership meeting, the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA) voted to oppose the new single family residence with a “detached” Accessory Dwelling Unit on a substandard lot at 404 E Alexandria Ave for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project does not meet the historical development pattern of Del Ray by not having street frontage.
2. Fire truck and life safety emergency access to the site.
3. Stormwater management on the site due to the historical flooding concentrated on the western end of the 400 block of E. Alexandria Ave.
4. The exclusion of the basement from the FAR calculation and setbacks is questionable as we do not think it meets the zoning requirements for being below the average grade calculation based on the proposed basement exterior walls in the courtyard.
5. Utility impact on the neighbors due to the numerous overhead electrical wires, the outflow connection for stormwater, and the construction issues with the site.
6. Impact of proposed construction on trees both on city owned and neighbors' properties.





7. Vision clearance at alley entrances.

The Del Ray Citizens Association Land Use Committee (DRCA LUC) held a public Zoom meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023. The applicant presented the SUP application that had been submitted to the City. Members of the community who were in attendance were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. On Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023, during the regular DRCA Zoom membership meeting, an abbreviated presentation was made and the motion set forth by the LUC was discussed.

The historical development pattern in Del Ray is to have houses that front on a street. Although alley homes exist in Old Town, it is not part of Del Ray's development and the proposal was not supported.

One of the main concerns of the neighbors was the potential restricted fire and life safety emergency vehicle access to the site due to the fact it does not have street frontage. The public alleys are only 10' wide and even the trash and recycling trucks cannot make it through the alleys. The various contractors currently pull the trash & recycle cans down the alley to the trucks parked on the street as the alley is too narrow.

The western end of E. Alexandria Ave near Mt. Vernon Ave has experienced numerous major floods during rain storms. The applicant was advised that the subterranean courtyard they are proposing will be exposed to flooding when these storms occur, with the potential of 3 -4 feet of stormwater entering the house as has happened to other residences. While it is conceivable that stormwater management features could mitigate the rain that could build up in the courtyard, it will take more than a sump pump dumping water onto grade to control the water. Tying into city storm drains will be necessary, and it is unclear at this time how the applicant would propose to deal with the water.

The project as designed is dependent on the basement square footage being excluded from the FAR calculation, and the assumption that because the basement does not count as FAR, the ADU is considered detached even though there are continuous interior spaces between the primary dwelling and the ADU. The LUC questioned whether the basement would comply for being below the average grade calculation. In addition, the setbacks do





not appear to be in compliance. It appears the foundation will project into the public alleys for the portion of the basement that is shown against the property lines.

The neighbors were also concerned about the numerous overhead electrical lines that supply power to their homes. The lines are fed off of a power pole that is at the north end of the project site and criss-cross overhead. Although the applicant stated he had had discussions with Dominion Power, an actual plan for how their homes would remain in service cannot be developed until the project is approved and the neighbors were left questioning what would happen.

There are also construction issues to be addressed in accessing the site due to the narrow alleys. The proposed structures encompass most of the site and there is not enough site available to use for staging during construction. The applicant stated that craning building materials over the row houses on Mt. Vernon was not feasible.

There are three trees on adjacent property whose root zones would be impacted by the retaining walls of the subterranean courtyard. Two are in the rear corners of 404 and 406 E. Alexandria and the other is on City-owned property adjacent to the site. The applicant has had discussions with the City Arborist about the City owned tree, but it appears the trees on the neighbors' properties have not been addressed.

Lastly, though an existing condition, the vision clearances at the alley entrances was pointed out by the neighbors as being potentially hazardous.

While we understand that the applicant is treating this as a feasibility study and does not want to invest too much time or money into the project before confirming if it is a buildable lot, the DRCA feels like there are too many unanswered variables regarding the proposed house and substandard lot. For these reasons, we cannot support the application.

During the meeting, the applicant stated that he intended to rent out the house and ADU. This information brought up the question of how this could be allowed, as zoning code section 7-203.B.6 Accessory dwellings, states that "the owner of the property shall maintain the property as their primary residence at the time the permit required by



7-203(A), above, is issued.” Requiring owner occupancy of either the primary dwelling or the ADU was of paramount importance when the DRCA originally supported the ADU ordinance. This was in order to control the use of the ADU and to discourage both units on a property being used for short-term rentals (VRBO and AirBnBs). Staff revealed that there was no formalized method for determining primary residence and that there was a Staff-level interpretation made on how to handle a proposal for both a new house and new ADU built on a vacant lot. It seems the primary residence requirement is effectively being ignored by this interpretation policy. This was quite a surprise to members of the DRCA and is something that needs clarification to both staff and the community. We are concerned that lack of enforcement of the primary residence requirement will lead to the majority of ADUs being used as short-term rentals, or by a developer to build out the maximum envelope of a site pushing the sale price higher, rather than providing additional affordable housing. Learning that there is not a homeowner living on site to talk to about mis-use of the ADU degrades the quality of life for those living adjacent to the property. We realize that the ADU topic deserves discussion separate from the SUP proposal under review, and would like to request that it be addressed with a written response to the DRCA outlining the current enforcement of the code.

Sincerely,

Kristine Hesse, DRCA LUC Co-Chair
Lisa Lettieri, DRCA LUC Co-Chair

Katie Waynick
DRCA President

cc: Sam Shelby, P & Z
Rachel Drescher, P & Z
Eric Teran, Eustilus Architects

From: Mary Ellen <maryellen.file@yahoo.com>

Sent: Friday, December 29, 2023 4:43 PM

To: Rachel M Drescher <rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: Ann.Horiwitz@alexandriava.gov

Subject: [EXTERNAL]404 A East Alexandria Avenue

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my objection to the plan to build a house in an unbuildable lot at the above referenced address.

There are safety concerns as well as parking, and other issues. That lot has been a nice patch of "green space."

The Del Ray Citizens Association is against this as well as the Del Ray Citizens.

I feel sure that if this lot is safe and practical to build on, someone would have done so 100 or more years ago. My family goes back over 100 years in Del Ray and I have lived here for 80 of those years. I love this neighborhood.

What I am taking from this is that the least important factor in this decision is the people it affects , although I am sure you care about our tax money.

I am also disappointed that no one has responded to the concerns of the Citizens Association.

I ask you to please not approve this project.

Mary Ellen File

1401 Mount Vernon Avenue

Alexandria 22301

Please consider

From: Raj Singh <raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, December 24, 2023 5:52 PM

Cc: Rachel M Drescher <rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov>; Ann Horowitz <ann.horowitz@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: 404A E Alexandria Ave

Hi Rachel and Ann,

I'm writing, as the owner of 404 E Alexandria, Raj and Kim Singh, about the development behind our home. There is a reason it hasn't been built on all this time, and there is a real possibility three large mature trees will die. A 2500 fine or 2 inch tree replacement isn't an acceptable solution. In addition the house will alter the sun and shade to all existing homes.

I'm curious how will the construction equipment get to the site and where will it be stored? In addition, within Del Ray, I don't believe a home has been built with no street frontage, and the architecture of the home doesn't fit in with the area.

The owner is a well known individual who owns several properties and lists them as short term rental. While it's unknown if this will be a short term rental, one can take the available data and conclude it will be. This doesn't adhere to more housing for residents if only tourists are using it.

Two del ray committees stated no to building on this site, so it's also peculiar that city council would go against the advice given.

I'm available to talk.

Raj

From: Matthew Kaim matthewkaim@yahoo.com

Sent: Wednesday January 3, 2024 1:43 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Concerns over 404A East Alexandria

Hello All,

My name is Matt Kaim and I am the property owner of 1413 Mt Vernon Avenue, which is adjacent to the lot being considered for a SUP for 404A E Alexandria Avenue in Del Ray. I have owned this home since 2009.

I plan to be at the zoning meeting tomorrow (January 4), but wanted to send a few of my serious concerns with you in this e-mail.

- 1) The 2600 sq ft lot size is nearly 50% smaller than the required 5000 sq ft R-2-5 zone requirement, and the 45' width of the lot is less than the 50' required width
- 2) The proposed property does not meet the 100' or less emergency access requirement. This is a big risk to all surrounding homes, including mine. The 100' requirement was set for a reason.
- 3) My property, the lot in question, and surrounding properties are prone to severe flooding. My property already gets supersaturated quickly and floods due to underground springs around my property and my neighbors' properties. My backyard is the lowest point of all surrounding properties and the runoff/storm water from the proposed structures will worsen this flooding. There is no street for the runoff from the proposed structures to be guided to.
- 4) The project does not comply with the city's vision clearance requirements, making it very dangerous for pedestrians/and small children, which are oftentimes in the alleys.
- 5) Any car parked in the proposed parking spot would need to maneuver into my parking area in order to drive down the alley. This is not acceptable.
- 6) The City did not meet with any neighbors to discuss concerns provided to the City through the Del Ray Citizen's Association.
- 7) The alley from Mt Vernon does not provide the width/clearance for excavation/construction equipment, and attempts to bring that equipment down the alley will cause damage to my property, including trees and cars parked in my parking area.
- 8) The 2 story main building will not look like an accessory structure.
- 9) Parking on Mt Vernon, E Alexandria, and the block in general is very limited. There is no abundance of parking.
- 10) A low-pitch roof does not meet the character of Del Ray.

11) The 100+ year old tree will likely be killed by this project. This is unacceptable, as is the nominal \$200 fine for killing the tree.

12) The approval of this construction will set a very bad precedent for allowing developers to build structures otherwise out of code/zoning laws across Del Ray and Alexandria.

Please let me know if you have any questions or wish to discuss any of this before the meeting tomorrow.

Thank you.

Matt Kaim

703-731-3782

From: Tom VanAntwerp tom@tomvanantwerp.com

Sent: Wednesday January 3, 2024 2:54 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Resident comments on docket items 5 and 6

I'm writing to express my views regarding docket item 5 (service station at Monroe and Mount Vernon Ave, Special Use Permit #2023-00097) and docket item 6 (404A E Alexandria, Special Use Permit #2023-00076).

I am against the extension of the SUP for the service station. The dual curb cuts for the service station on both Mount Vernon and Monroe make it treacherous for pedestrians walking by it on any side. It contributes to danger to pedestrians on Mount Vernon Ave, a street mostly geared toward pedestrian-friendly commercial. This service station contributes to making Monroe a busier street than it ought to be, creating a hazardous divide between north and south ends of Del Ray. This service station exists in contradiction to the aims of the Mount Vernon Avenue Area Business Plan. A 20 year extension of this SUP locks the neighborhood into a poor allocation of this land, which doesn't well serve the actual residents versus those driving through. I encourage you to not support this SUP.

I am for the SUP for 404A E Alexandria. I live very near to the lot in question, and it has always perplexed me why that land stood empty. Putting a new home there would be an excellent addition to the neighborhood.

Thank you for taking the time to review my comments.

Best,

Tom VanAntwerp

Resident, Del Ray

From: Eric Weiner ejw77@me.com

Sent: Thursday January 4, 2024 7:58 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Opposition to Special Use Permit #2023-00067 - 404A E Alexandria Ave

Good evening Mr. Pierce and Planning Commission Members,

We live at 414 E Alexandria Ave and we are participating in the public hearing via Zoom. We are writing to express our total opposition to the granting of Special Use Permit #2023-00067 - 404A E Alexandria Ave.

Some of our main reasons for opposition include:

- This project does not fit with the character of Del Ray

- The plan will kill the large, 100+ year old tree on the adjacent property and the only consequence for killing it is to replace it with a 2in diameter tree + a \$200 penalty - this is unacceptable

- Stormwater management will not be able to keep up ...70% of the home is underground and will flood and the lack of a street to run the water to will invariably flood the adjacent properties.

- East Alexandria Ave lacks sufficient parking to support this proposed dwelling

- Three of the four alleys surrounding the home are unimproved and don't provide access to the home

- If approved, this project would set a terrible precedent whereby builders and developers will build similarly ugly structures that will divide existing lots.

- This lot has no street frontage and the fire department would not have the necessary access for timely emergency response

- Eric Teran and Daniela Gross are investors looking to make a profit rather than live in a Del Ray home that retains the character of the neighborhood

Thank you to you and the planning commission for considering our concerns and opposition,

Eric Weiner and Leah Kegler

From: Eric Weiner ejw77@me.com

Sent: Monday January 15, 2024 6:33 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: January 20 City Council Public Hearing Opposition to Special Use Permit #2023-00076 - 404A E Alexandria Ave

Dear Alexandria City Council Members,

The Alexandria Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 4th to consider a request for a special use permit (#2023-00076) to construct what can only be described as an unwelcome "Frankenstein" bunker/house at 404A E Alexandria Ave. Despite unanimous opposition voiced by several residents living near the property, the Planning Commission voted 4-3 to approve the permit.

We live down the street from this property at 414 E Alexandria Ave. We purchased a single family home here a few years back in large part because of charm and character of the street. Beautiful craftsman style homes with manicured lawns and flower gardens line the street and Japanese cherry and maple trees bloom in the spring and fall.

The proposed structure at 414A will have none of this quality or charm and the owner intends for this to be a transient, short-term rental property, not a thoughtful addition to the neighborhood. It would also be a nuisance for our neighbors on Mt. Vernon Ave. who depend on the alley for entry/exit and waste services.

We join our numerous fellow neighbors on E Alexandria Ave. and Mt. Vernon Ave. in opposing this proposed construction for the reasons outlined below. We also invite you to visit the micro-lot at 404A and see for yourselves where developer Eric Teran intends to brute-force a dwelling between existing property lines.

If you visit, you will see why no one developed this property. Please see the attached photos to give you an idea.

Our Primary reasons for opposition include:

- This project does not fit with the character of Del Ray

- The plan will kill the large, 100+ year old tree on the adjacent property and the only consequence for killing it is to replace it with a 2in diameter tree + a \$200 penalty - this is unacceptable
- Stormwater management will not be able to keep up ...70% of the proposed home is underground and will flood and the lack of a street to run the water to will invariably flood the adjacent properties.
- Mt. Vernon Ave. and East Alexandria Ave lack sufficient parking to support this proposed dwelling. There is also insufficient space for construction vehicles/equipment to safely stage at the lot.
- Three of the four alleys surrounding the home are unimproved and don't provide access to the home
- If approved, this project would set a terrible precedent whereby builders and developers will build similarly ugly structures that will divide existing lots.
- This lot has no street frontage and the fire department would not have the necessary access for timely emergency response
- Eric Teran and Daniela Gross are developers looking to make a profit rather than live in a Del Ray home that retains the character of the neighborhood. When challenged at the planning commission meeting, Eric Teran said he would just get permits from the city to achieve his construction plan. His responses made it clear that he is not giving serious consideration to the real issues his proposed project will create for the people living in our neighborhood.

Please vote to oppose this project.

Thank you.

Eric Weiner and Leah Kegler

02/23/2024

To: Alexandria City Council Members
Alexandria, VA

Subject: **Vote NO on Special Use Permit (SUP #2023-00076) – a follow-up**

Dear City Council Members,

Please accept this correspondence in addition to my prior letters on this matter, dated 11/7/2023 and 1/19/2024. I am once again writing to ask you to **VOTE NO on SUP #2023-00076**. Furthermore, I implore you to seriously re-evaluate any thoughts of support for this proposal for the multitude of reasons which have been brought up by myself and other owners & occupants of the adjacent properties on this block corner. Better yet, I invite you to come out and physically walk the lot yourself and talk to some of the folks that live here as you consider some of these arguments. To revisit and further clarify some of my concerns from prior letters:

Community Engagement:

Not to “beat a dead horse” here, but just so you can see this from our perspective (as the adjacent neighbors of 404A) to understand why we feel so jaded by how this all has been coordinated:

- *November 2, 2023*: The “coffee and donuts” meeting. Mr. Teran invited select neighbors to hear his proposed plan for the lot. As an immediately adjacent neighbor, I received NO notification of or invite to this meeting (and still have no clear answers why).
- *November 7 & 8, 2023*: DRCA’s Land Use Committee Meeting & General Meeting to follow (for vote): DRCA voted to OPPOSE the SUP for several reasons outlined in a letter to the Planning Director. NO further mention of this project was heard (by adjacent neighbors) for 6 weeks.
- *December 21 & 22, 2023*: Signage appears announcing the upcoming Planning Commission & City Council Meetings. Staff report is acquired & circulated by neighbors; shock and outrage ensue as we all feel blindsided -- what was left as a very clear NO at the last community meeting has now turned into a seemingly flawless staff report in support of this project. NO further community outreach had been coordinated and we all were unaware of any further discussions or planning happening between the applicant and P&Z staff.
- *January 4, 2024*: Planning Commission Meeting: Several speakers, including myself, brought up concerns regarding the lack of community engagement by city staff & the applicant – and the planning commissioners later spent a fair bit of time discussing this concern further. The SUP barely gets approved by the Planning Commission in a divisive 4-3 vote, despite some suggestions of deferment (Manor, McMahon, Lyle) so that the community engagement which was clearly lacking in this process could be addressed.
- *January 20, 2024*: City Council Public Hearing. Despite having an option to upload letters to the Speaker Request Form on the city’s website, most of our uploaded letters did not get included as attachments on the public docket. This was not discovered until 5pm on January 19, which led most of us to flood the emails of council members with our letters in hopes that our voices could be heard. Whether this was a technological error or direct omission, this unfortunately added to neighbors’ concerns that we were intentionally being ignored, overlooked, and again muted in this process. Twenty-five neighbors showed up to the City Council Meeting on January 20 to speak in opposition of the SUP. Unfortunately, the

decision to defer was made due to an unfortunate “clerical error”, along with an admonition by Mayor Wilson that the applicant and P&Z staff arrange to meet with neighbors to discuss and address concerns in the interim.

- *Personal communications with Mr. Teran:* At the beginning of January’s City Council Meeting, I sought out and introduced myself to the applicants, Eric Teran & Daniela Gross, expressed my concerns for not being contacted previously in this process, and provided them my name, number, and email. I have since been in direct contact with Mr. Teran, by email and rarely by text, as after the deferment he had sent me the correct building plans (which were not uploaded to the docket correctly) & offered to meet with me to show me the virtual reality (VR) rendering of the proposed build, as he felt “this would give [me] a better idea of how the area will look once complete.” He had asked me to extend this offer to neighbors, but many neighbors expressed that they wanted to have direct outreach from Mr. Teran (rather than through me). Moreover, we all hoped for a more-official meeting that would include P&Z staff as well.
- *February 16, 2024:* After some schedule conflicts over the prior weeks, Eric and I finally met at 4pm last Friday so that I could view the project on the VR platform. I asked some specific questions about the lay of the land, key items like the placement of the existing Verizon utility box in relation to the home (which is not included in the VR platform or highlighted on drawings), commented about how the omission of the buildings/fences to the north and east of the home are not depicted in VR and this makes it appear much more open on those sides than it actually would be, and asked key questions about tree location & impact. I pointed out that one tree, #5 as designated on building plans, is inaccurately positioned on the site map and is, in fact, growing from within the alleyway that he will be required to pave as a 10-ft wide alley as per the staff’s recommended conditions (item #7). Additionally, I expressed concerns about the trees on my (406) & Raj Singh’s property (404), trees #2 & #3 respectively, and that there would be significant property damage to my home if either of these trees were to die and fall because of the build, with no recourse or liability outlined in the proposal. He commented that the arborist who surveyed the trees did not believe that there would be significant impact to the root structure of either tree by the excavation plans, adding “but you never know until you start digging”. Ultimately, it was clear to me that this was, in fact, a presentation & not a venue for meaningful dialogue and discussions.
- *February 16-17, 2024:* Communications from Planning Director, Karl Moritz. Just after 5pm on Friday, I received an email from Mr. Moritz & subsequently a voicemail from an office assistant to look for an email. The email stated:

“I know you have expressed concerns about this project and your submissions are part of the record. I also wanted to let you know that Planning and Zoning staff will be stopping by the houses of all of the adjacent neighbors over the weekend to answer any additional questions you may have and have the information for the public hearing. We hope to touch base with you.”

To note, this was 8 days ahead of the hearing (when they have had more than 3 weeks to reach out to meet with us), less than 24 hours’ notice of staff planning to stop by our homes, and on a holiday weekend when many neighbors were out of town! It certainly felt very disingenuous & like they were coming out simply to “check off the box” ahead of the City Council meeting to say that there was “community engagement”. Furthermore, the email was circulated amongst neighbors & it appeared that only 5-7 of neighbors had received this

notice (whether by email or phone), leaving most of the group totally unaware of this invitation.

As you know, Karl Moritz & Sam Shelby came out to the lot on Saturday afternoon, which was in 37–38-degree windy weather, to meet with a group of about 12 neighbors (I understand that another meeting was held the next day, but I was not a part of this). Karl started by saying that the purpose of coming out to meet us was actually to let us know that, unfortunately, they had made a *second* clerical error in the process by not mailing out the certified notice letters in the timeframe required. It was merely as a convenience, then, that they utilize this opportunity to answer any questions and discuss concerns at the same time, since they were required to have a face-to-face meeting with us already about the notice error. Furthermore, it struck me as curious, then, that in parting from my Friday meeting with Mr. Teran, he said to be on the lookout for the new certified mailing which had just gotten mailed out that day. So, he the applicant knew on Friday that these were getting mailed out, yet did not realize the problem therein?

A multitude of concerns were voiced at Saturday’s impromptu meeting, but ultimately the meeting was concluded by Karl M. after about 1 hour & 10 minutes in the cold. I would argue that although we did bring up several concerns, the location & weather made it incredibly difficult for us to cover everything we wanted to.

- *February 20-21, 2024:* Recommendations for deferment from staff. Reportedly, one of the 12 adjacent neighbors could not be reached by staff to agree to the “Waiver of right to written notice,” so P&Z concluded on Tuesday that they would be unable to get 100% agreement to move forward with this as planned on Saturday, despite every other neighbor (and the applicant) wanting to do so! Interestingly, when one of us reached out to the final missing neighbor, they responded right away that they would vote to proceed on Saturday as planned. (1) Even though this may have been an honest mistake that city staff is struggling to amend, to us it feels like an awfully convenient excuse for staff to again push this back in order to gain more time to make concessions for the shortcomings pointed out and compose counter-arguments to some significant concerns that we have voiced. (2) I would also like to highlight that most neighbors were planning to submit updated letters to council on Wednesday, but did not do so because we understood that this was going to be deferred with no further options otherwise. Now, once again, we are submitting letters at the last minute and hoping that you will have time to consider them.

Concerns Arising from the Staff Report:

I would like to highlight what I feel are several oversights, oversteps in assumptions, and all-too-convenient omissions contained in the P&Z staff report:

- *OVERSIGHT:* DRCA’s decision to NOT support this project was quite simple, on the basis that any build on this site would not conform to the character of the neighborhood, mainly because the lot itself has no street frontage.
 - o Staff confirmed this obvious fact multiple times in the report by stating that they are “not aware of any other lots without frontage in Del Ray” (an fairly noncommittal statement) and “this is the only alley lot in the Del Ray neighborhood” (a very certain statement, which makes the prior comment quite odd). Staff goes on to state that Zoning Ordinance 7-1007 allows for building on land without frontage if a SUP is granted but seemingly does not recognize that this is a “catch-22” condition that cannot be reconciled because 12-401(C) requires the proposed development to be

compatible with the existing neighborhood character – which an alley lot/lot without street frontage is not, as per the neighborhood report.

- *OMISSION*: In the “BACKGROUND” comments about the lot, staff omitted the fact that this original plot of land created by the sub-divisions of this area in 1938 was labeled as “reserved for parking” (for the adjacent row of homes along Mt. Vernon which were built by the developer who owned the land). In its origin, there was never an intent for this area of land to be utilized for development beyond as a parking lot – its resulting tiny lot size & lack of street frontage support this fact.
- *OMISSION*: DRCA voted NO on this proposal, in no uncertain terms. Staff conveniently omitted this fact in their report summary & instead, under “*Community Engagement*” simply stated that DRCA “provided a letter [...] outlining their concerns with the project.” Staff then utilized the list of concerns in that letter to formulate a targeted approach of “solutions”, excuses, or, simply, opinions to every known argument (at the time) to push this through as what they insinuated was a favorable proposal without flaw.
- *OVERSTEP*: The first paragraph of section “II – STAFF ANALYSIS” of the staff report seemingly adds on verbiage to Zoning Ordinance 12-401(C) that is not actually there – they add to the end of the clause of “being compatible with the existing neighborhood character” the qualifier “in terms of height, bulk, and design”. This incorrectly implies that “character” as referenced in the zoning ordinance refers *only* to the building itself being built, not giving any consideration to the particulars regarding its location and lack of street frontage which make it out-of-character (as noted above).
- *OVERSTEP*: Because of the clear oddity of being an alley lot (and again, the ONLY one in Del Ray), staff proposed that the design of the house was such that it would “mimic the appearance of an accessory dwelling.” Why then does this have its own ADU also proposed along with the main house? And how, then, can an ADU be approved when the applicant’s primary residence is not the property in question? This was a concern that was brought up in DRCA’s letter, additionally requesting further clarification on this issue:

“Requiring owner occupancy of either the primary dwelling or the ADU was of paramount importance when the DRCA originally supported the ADU ordinance [...] Staff revealed that [...] there was a Staff-level interpretation made on how to handle a proposal for both a new house and new ADU built on a vacant lot. It seems the primary residence requirement is effectively being ignored by this interpretation policy. This was quite a surprise to members of the DRCA and is something that needs clarification to both staff and the community. We are concerned that [...] mis-use of the ADU degrades the quality of life for those living adjacent to the property. We [...] would like to request that it be addressed with a written response to the DRCA outlining the current enforcement of the code.”

We, as the affected neighbors (being forced to navigate zoning codes for answers to our questions that are not being addressed in any official forums), would also like to have this response.

- *OVERSTEP AND OMISSION*: While having this parcel of land *taxed* as a lot with a building valuation might somehow increase adjacent property values as was stated in the report (“II. STAFF ANALYSIS - PROPERTY VALUES”), having a significantly below-ground dwelling built in an area of known flooding (the lot being a major low-point of ground in this block corner – as evidenced by several pictures previously submitted to council by neighbors) will undoubtedly impact nearby homes which already experience

significant flooding or flooding risks. I would argue that having these homes flood frequently because of changes to the topography and sub-terrain flow in the immediate area by building the proposed dwelling will negatively impact property value to a much greater degree than any increased land assessment might raise it. TO NOTE - Mr. Teran's solution, in recent emails to neighbors *just today* about this concern is to explain how there are "ways to fix this starting with affordable options to very expensive solutions"- clearly, he understands that flooding will pose a major impact on several neighbors requiring several homes to seek solutions, at considerable expense.

- *OVERSTEP*: Staff passes off these flooding concerns by simply stating "compliance with stormwater requirements will be ensured during the grading plan process." Given the significant threat to many homes, I would argue that this important detail should be evaluated in conjunction with considering this SUP, as this very significantly would (Section 12-401(C)) diminish or impair the established property values in the surrounding areas. One point cannot be considered while the other is ignored.
- *OMISSION*: Furthermore, the Zoning Ordinance specifically outlines flooding as a required consideration to be met for approval of an SUP:
 - "11-504 - Considerations on review. (B) In reviewing the application, the city council may take into consideration the following factors where it determines that such factors are relevant and such consideration appropriate: (7) Whether the proposed use will increase the hazard to adjacent property from flood, increased runoff or water damage."

Neighbor Concerns:

Thus far, many of the arguments which have been brought up by neighbors have fallen under the umbrella of 11-504's considerations on review:

"11-504 - Considerations on review. (B) In reviewing the application, the city council may take into consideration the following factors where it determines that such factors are relevant and such consideration appropriate: (10) Whether the proposed use will have any substantial or undue adverse effect upon, or will lack amenity or will be incompatible with, the use or enjoyment of adjacent and surrounding property, the character of the neighborhood, traffic conditions, parking, utility facilities, and other matters affecting the public health, safety and general welfare."

- DRCA, as the *official neighborhood association* to first review this project, has stated clearly that this does not fit the character of the neighborhood. Again, the argument that there may be similar (alley) lots or builds in other areas of the city or state or world doesn't matter – as the code clearly chose to state that this be considered in light of the *neighborhood*, not the city or state or world.
- Several neighbors have brought up concerns regarding traffic/accessibility and associated safety considerations that this tricky project will encounter.
- Parking concerns have been brought up, particularly in regard to whomever will be renting the new house being able to safely navigate in & out of the designated parking space & regarding increased parking density on adjacent streets. Mr. Teran had said in the January 4th meeting that while he would be able to maneuver the narrow alleyway & tricky parking spot, his wife or friends may not be able to do so – how then can we predict the ability of renters, specifically short term renters (even though they should not be expecting

accessibility or parking for the ADU rental, we all know that many would, at least initially while unpacking for their stay) to successfully be able to navigate this and the specific alley-access difficulties (as noted below) in a new & totally unfamiliar neighborhood?

- There is significant anticipated utility impact, as most of the power supply to adjacent homes will need to be re-routed as part of this project. To date, we have heard no details of this, other than that the applicant recognizes that it will need to be done & will be quite expensive.
- Safety, particularly centered around specifics of the proposed alley for use to access the property (off Mt. Vernon) has been another big point of discussion. As others have pointed out, this may be the ONLY alley which exits onto a main thoroughfare road and crossing traffic on Mt. Vernon (whether vehicular, pedestrian, or cycling/scootering) is generally not expecting a vehicle to exit/enter from this location, nor is there great visibility of the vehicles trying to do so at the intersection with the main road. Furthermore, confused delivery drivers will increase traffic on the alley (to access the lot/home) and will thereby increase these safety concerns.
- NOTE: This list does not encompass all concerns – and I am sure you have plenty of documents to read about said arguments, but I merely wanted to highlight those issues pertinent to this referenced section of the zoning code.

In conclusion, in light of the (1) mountain of concerns brought forth to you by neighbors, (2) palpable public fury regarding the inadequate community engagement throughout this process, (3) the concerns raised by the oversights, oversteps, and omissions apparent in the staff report, and (4) the multitude of significant procedural errors that have plagued this proposal, I would argue that supporting this SUP is downright egregious. For all these reasons, this proposal should NOT warrant your consideration, nor support.

Sincerely,

Alicia Montgomery
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01/19/2024

To: Alexandria City Council Members
Alexandria, VA

Subject: **Request to Vote NO on Special Use Permit (SUP #2023-00076)**

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to you as a concerned homeowner, neighbor directly adjacent to the lot in question, and dedicated citizen of the Del Ray neighborhood in Alexandria. As an owner-occupant, I am deeply invested in the well-being and integrity of our neighborhood and am an active member in the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA). It is with this vested interest that I would like to address significant concerns regarding this proposal. I know that many of these concerns are echoed by other adjacent neighbors, as I hope you will see evidenced by our planned community involvement at the upcoming City Council Public Meeting on Saturday January 20th.

I would also like to apologize, in advance, for the very lengthy letter that I am submitting to you. The proposed development and subsequent rush, as it seems, to get this pushed through raises concerns that there is an underlying agenda to simply get new properties on the books to count towards the recent Zoning for Housing movement. This, unfortunately, has been coupled with what has felt like an effort to mute the local community from involvement in any back-and-forth discussions on the matter. For these reasons, I have taken the liberty of elaborating on my thoughts on several pressing issues that I feel merit careful consideration.

1. Lack of Communication with Surrounding Neighbors:

I am, at least, happy to say that this whole process has allowed me to meet many surrounding neighbors that I had not connected with before. It has been encouraging to see our local micro-community come together to discuss concerns, share information, and utilize the varied subset of knowledge and skills that each of us possess to help make sense of all of this. In stark contrast, I am very disheartened that our new prospective neighbor has taken no such initiative; while Mr. Teran claims that he organized a neighborhood meet & greet, I, as an owner directly adjacent to his lot, was not given the opportunity to be involved in any of this – I received no such

announcement or invite, nor has there been a simple knock on the door to open any lines of communication. This, along with Mr. Teran's inconsistencies thus far in public meetings about his intended use for the single-family home (from initially stating that he intended to reside at the property at the "meet and greet" to later saying that he intends to use this as a long-term rental), have left many of us very unsettled and untrusting.

Furthermore, as pointed out in my verbal testimony on January 4th, I am frustrated about the lack of communication between city zoning staff and the immediate neighbors. I was, admittedly, probably naïve to presume that the lack of communication was because no further action was being taken on this topic – that there was no need for further input on the matter unless the applicant were to propose a new plan to put forward for DRCA's approval prior to moving on to the city level. I was later aghast upon reading the planning and zoning staff's ultimate recommendations for approval ahead of the January 4th meeting, as this was a complete 180° from the DRCA's recommendation. I sincerely hope that the staff had simply just taken Mr. Teran at his word that he was having some form of open and active dialogue with the immediate community in reconstructing his plans. There certainly seemed to be a very open line of communication between Mr. Teran and staff, as evidenced in their report. In fact, Mr. Teran stated himself on record at the January 4th meeting, "staff, with us, they have been very receptive... the neighbors, the few that we have been able to talk to, were receptive." However, the turnout of 7 adjacent residents to voice opposition at the January 4th meeting, 5 letters submitted to city staff in opposition (not including the DRCA's opposition statement), and our neighborhood chat/email group of over 15 individuals (spanning over 9 properties immediately adjacent to the lot) does not support this claim. Unfortunately, the lack of community involvement has left the overwhelming impression that this SUP has been pushed through by an overzealous staff to get something on the books as an example of a Zoning for Housing (a "clever solution to providing housing in Alexandria" as quoted in the January 4th meeting).

Considering this, I feel that it is pertinent to note that the vote passed only by a narrow 4-3 majority. A large percentage of the 1 hour of discussions on this docket item was, in fact, spent on this concern. At least two of the commissioners who voted in favor of approval (Mr. Manor & Mrs. McMahon) stated that they, too, recognized that there was a glaring lack of communication and that they would support a motion to defer a vote to allow time for this. Ultimately, no motion was put forth for deferral as Mr. Macek argued that "it's not our job to say, well you should have talked to the neighbors more." Whose job is it, then – and where should we expect that step in this process?

2. Not Fitting the Character of the Neighborhood:

Clearly, "character" is very difficult to define – as it's a subjective judgment call and therefore open to interpretation. It seems, then, that the character of the neighborhood would be defined by a process of dialogue and feedback between developers/owners and the surrounding neighbors. This has been the precedent of expectation in other Alexandria neighborhoods for quite some time – Mr. Brown referenced in the January 4th meeting his past experiences as a part

of the Northridge Citizens Association on this matter, being that they would require applicants to have such dialogue with neighbors before a proposal would even be considered. As outlined above, sufficient dialogue did not happen in this case.

The staff report explicitly states that “this is the only alley lot in the Del Ray neighborhood” and “staff is not aware of any other lots without frontage in Del Ray”. Both are KEY factors in why this development does not fit in! While the applicants have attempted to take measures to hide or disguise their dwelling as 2 ADU’s associated with the street-facing homes to the south of the lot (404 & 406 E. Alexandria), the very fact that they recognize the need to do so shows that they recognize that this is out of character for single family dwellings in this location. Furthermore, zone ordinances do not allow for multiple ADUs on a single property, so the appearance of 2 “smaller appearing” dwellings also inherently does not fit.

Furthermore, I would like to reference additional selected commentary from the January 4th Planning Commission Meeting regarding this topic and my resulting thoughts:

- Carson (could not hear last name clearly), T&ES staff: “We are not breaking the mold with this project. In Old Town, there are alleys that are much narrower and there are other lane-way homes all throughout Alexandria, particularly right across the street, and all throughout the greater OT area where they take access from an alley. And so, it’s not a development that is atypical or not seen, in fact it’s quite popular not just here but all around the world because it’s a way to get incrementally smaller housing units on land that does not have street frontage.”
- Mr. Macek: “This isn’t that different than carriage houses and other things that are in the back of other lots that you see in the city. People are trying to say that you don’t build on lots in Del Ray – well Del Ray is part of the city, and we have lots that are along alleyways... we are not the planning commission for Del Ray, and we have to look at things on a citywide basis.”

To these, I would argue that the Zoning Ordinance Section 12-401(C) states: City council, upon consideration of the special use permit, finds that the proposed development will not unreasonably impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, will not diminish or impair the established property values in the surrounding areas, and will be compatible with the existing neighborhood character.

Neighborhood - noun

1. a district, especially one forming a community within a town or city.

By explicit definition, we are talking specifically about the neighborhood of Del Ray, not Old Town. It is, therefore, precisely the job of the Planning Commission/City Council to consider this in the eyes of the Del Ray community at large, and to reconsider the position as stated by the DRCA’s letter in opposition to this project.

3. Non-Compliance with ADU Requirements:

The proposed development does not meet the requirements for building an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) since the owner does not plan to have his primary residence as the home being built:

7-203 - Accessory dwellings.

(B) Use limitations.

(6) The owner of the property shall maintain the property as their primary residence at the time the permit required by section 7-203(A), above, is issued.

While residence for a new build site may be hard to define, Mr. Teran has stated, on record January 4th, that his intent is to rent the main property as a long-term rental, rather than occupy the residence himself. This, therefore, puts the ADU addition in non-compliance with established city regulations.

Somewhat on topic, concerns were voiced by many neighbors about this ADU being used specifically for short-term rentals (aka AirBNB), specifically in regards to individuals who are not familiar with the neighborhood being able to safely navigate the narrow alleyway if trying to access this by car – even if renters are told there is no parking for the ADU, I presume that many would attempt to use the public alleyway as a route to easily unload on arrival, not realizing that they will not be able to exit without backing out of the length of the alley and back on to a very busy main road (Mt. Vernon Avenue) with limited vision clearance. Although the Planning Commission commented that this was beyond the scope of their job to approve or deny the SUP proposal, there was considerable time taken for discussion about this topic. Notably, Ms. Lyle stated that although there are regulations in place (and tax revenue as a strong motivator for the city to enforce this), they have trouble even enforcing this in her HOA, and that this would foreseeably be more difficult to do so for a standalone single-family home.

4. Flooding Implications on Immediate Surrounding Neighbors:

Serious concerns have been raised about flooding impacts that this structure may bring upon immediate surrounding neighbors, me included. Protecting the well-being and property of our community members from environmental risks is paramount, and a thorough assessment of potential flooding risks is necessary. While I understand that this issue gets addressed officially in later stages of development planning, I urge you to consider this matter, at least as part of a holistic assessment of the implications of said plans, as you consider this early step of evaluating the SUP proposal.

Many of our homes were built in the 1930's with basements that match the footprint of our respective above-surface homes. Most of us to the west, north, and south of the lot face constant issues with flooding in our basements. My sump pump is always highly active during storms - and most recently with a substantial storm on January 9th we also had to utilize a Shop-Vac to evacuate excess water from our sump-pump basin every 3-4 hours through the night. Attached are a selection pictures of the SUP lot (404-A E. Alexandria) from the viewpoint of the 2nd story back windows of my home, January 9, 2024 (please refer to images submitted by email as they were too large to include in this file):

- Approx. 4:45pm: Images 1 - 3
- Approx. 6:45pm: Images 4 - 5

Referencing online Alexandria City watershed maps, the Hooffs Run underground watershed lies below the city in the Northridge, Del Ray, and Rosemont neighborhoods - with a complex array of underground streams being common to the area. Given this - and the provided documentation of significant standing ground-water on the SUP lot & adjacent properties from recent storms - there is a significant concern that the proposed plan's massive below-ground footprint, which runs nearly lot-line to lot-line of the entire lot (minus the changes made in attempt to reduce impact the local tree's critical root zone), will adversely affect the local watershed "bowl", despite stated measures to provide "appropriate" draining of the above-ground structures.

While I agree we should not stop an owner from utilizing their property by right, this is not a build-by-right lot. In terms of the flooding concerns raised, I do not feel that pushing this project through to the benefit of one owner, yet probable detriment of 9 surrounding homes (to the west, north, and south of the lot) is sound practice.

5. Minimum Requirements for Fire Access:

As clearly stated, the proposed development does not meet the minimum requirements for fire access, necessitating a code adjustment to green-light the build. Ensuring the safety of our community is of utmost importance, and any allowances outside of set standards should be carefully considered to avoid compromising residents' property and well-being. It seems to reason that the code guidelines are there for a reason and that adjusting this could limit access to the development and adjacent properties. While staff pointed out the code requirement for vehicular access to be 100ft from a dwelling's main entrance, there was an additional concern raised by Ms. Ramirez at the January 4th meeting that alleys generally must also be ~20ft for ample fire-truck access (code requirement referenced below). All the alleyways adjacent to this property are 10ft wide alleys, so this in conjunction with the property exceeding the 100ft minimum access requirement, lead me to have persistent concerns about fire safety and access to the lot.

- **ARTICLE B (FIRE PREVENTION), CHAPTER 2 (FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION), TITLE 4 (PUBLIC SAFETY) OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA:**

Appendix D 101.1: Requirements. The following requirements shall be followed when designing emergency vehicle access:

1. Access for emergency vehicles shall be provided to within 100 feet of the main or principal entrance to every building. The access shall be provided by a public or private street or parking lot.
- **VIRGINIA STATEWIDE FIRE PREVENTION CODE (2012) SECTION 503.2.1:**
Dimensions: Fire apparatus access roads shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet, exclusive of shoulders, except for approved

security gates in accordance with section 503.6, and an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches.

6. Impact to Adjacent Privately Owned Trees:

While I commend Mr. Teran's adjustments to his basement footprint in an attempt to preserve the critical root structure of the Silver Maple on public land, my understanding was that the arborist stated that there would be a moderate risk for impact to this tree. I share my neighbor's concerns as expressed in prior statements that if tree protection measures for this tree fail, there is a meager fine of \$2,500 or a requirement to place an immature 2" tree. Given the location of this tree, if the tree dies and falls, there will likely be minimal impact to adjacent property.

My additional concern is that the current requirement of notifying residents about potential damage to adjacent privately owned trees is insufficient for my comfort as a property owner. If my tree (#2, the Siberian Elm) or my neighbor's tree (#3, the Northern Catalpa) were to die because of construction, there could be considerable damage to my property. Given Mr. Teran's lack of engagement with many neighbors, I am left with little hope that any remediation would be made/offered to offset my losses.

Lastly, given the long-established err in paving the footprint of the alley from E. Alexandria Ave. that predated most, if not all neighbors along Mt. Vernon Ave. (1401-1411), the last 2 trees would certainly die as they are growing from within the 10-foot alleyway.

7. Miscellaneous Concerns:

Without adding further lengthy dialogue on further items, I would also like to officially state concerns with the following items which I'm sure other neighbors will address:

- Parking implications of adding additional housing density to this corner of the block:
Staff report states that there is still ample on-street parking on both Mt. Vernon and E. Alexandria Avenues. I would be intrigued to know their definition of "ample" as, on any given day, there is no abundance of parking on these streets or adjacent blocks. Pictures of these streets have previously been submitted by Angela Rice.
- Construction Logistics: The 10ft alleyway will be a significant limiting factor in the logistics of how heavy construction vehicles will access the property. Furthermore, there was no forethought in planning for where construction materials and vehicles will be stored for the duration of the project, as they legally cannot be parked/stored on public roads/access & the very nature of the lot-line to lot-line build does not leave room for onsite storage.
- Increased usage of the alley off of Mt. Vernon Ave. As this lot does not have street frontage, this will inherently increase traffic (foot traffic or unexpected vehicular traffic) as needed to access the property for deliveries (mail, Amazon/FedEx/UPS, food deliveries, etc.) and this can lead to a heightened risk for pedestrian accidents along the narrow alleyway.

In conclusion, because the Del Ray Citizens Association overwhelmingly voted to not approve the SUP whereas the Alexandria Planning Commission narrowly approved the SUP with a split vote, this underscores the divisive nature of the proposed development within our community. Such a significant level of opposition warrants careful consideration. I urge you to carefully consider these concerns and vote **against** the approval of SUP #2023-00076.

I greatly appreciate your attention to this matter and your dedication to serving the best interests of Alexandria & of our Del Ray neighborhood. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alicia Montgomery
Homeowner, Neighbor, and Citizen of Alexandria

IMAGE 1



IMAGE 2



IMAGE 3



IMAGE 4



IMAGE 5



CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Ingrid Allen <ingridsallen@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 10, 2024 5:59 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]E. Alexandria Ave. Resident Opposed to Special Use Permit #2023-00076

You don't often get email from ingridsallen@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To City Councilors:

I am Ingrid Allen, resident of 416 E Alexandria Ave. - just down the street from the proposed project at 404 E. Alexandria.

I am OPPOSED to this project for the following reasons:

1. The lot size is way too small for a lot in our immediate area
2. The lot is too small for a single family Home let alone a SFH AND an ADU
3. The proposed design is not in character with the EXISTING neighbors' homes
4. The home design is not even close to being in character with the EXISTING neighborhood.
5. The lot size is NOT common or compatible with other SF developed lots.
6. There are no SF developed Lots having NO STREET FRONTAGE and by definition, are not compatible!

The incompatibility and oddity of the non street frontage/alley lot and Home by definition will negatively impact property values of surrounding homes.

Please vote NO on SUP #2023-00076!!

Thank you, Ingrid Allen

--

Ingrid S. Allen
ingridsallen@gmail.com
202-415-0362

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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Thank you, Ingrid Allen

--

Ingrid S. Allen
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202-415-0362

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Singh, Raj <raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 07, 2024 8:28 AM
To: Justin Wilson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Amy Jackson; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP #2023-00076: SAY NO to 404A East Alexandria

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ALCON,

I am writing again to log my **opposition** to SUP20223-0076 on the substandard property at 404A east Alexandria Ave. As all of my immediate neighbors have already registered their thoughtful and reasonable concerns/issues, I wont go into the minor details again.

- 1) If approved, the homes surrounding this property **will** flood.
 - a. This vacant lot, absorbs a lot of rain water through a root system consisting of a complex network of individual roots that vary in length and age. Vacant lots city wide may cumulatively infiltrate 50% plus additional annual rainfall volume as compared to built lots.
 - b. Historically, green infrastructure (GI; the use of soils, plants, and landscape design to control stormwater) has been introduced across urban areas as a decentralized, distributed approach to reduce sewer system overflows and to deliver other tangible benefits.

Please make the right decision, not the easy one.

V/r,

-raj and kim singh

From: Singh, Raj
Sent: Thursday, February 15, 2024 3:03 PM
To: justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov; john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov; Canek.Aguirre@alexandriava.gov; Amy.Jackson@alexandriava.gov; alyia.gaskins@alexandriava.gov; Kirk.McPike@alexandriava.gov; Sarah.Bagley@alexandriava.gov; councilcomment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com
Subject: SUP #2023-00076: SAY NO to 404A East Alexandria on 24 FEB

My name is Raj Singh and I am the owner of 404 E Alexandria. I am writing, **again**, in **opposition** of the Special Use Permission (SUP) application for 404 A E Alexandria lot (Applicants: Eric Teran and Daniela Gross).

1. Del Ray Citizens Association recommended not supporting SUP (see attached file)
2. Building an ADU is **against** zoning code as this is not their primary resident nor will it be at project start.
 - a. City Council approved ADU policy on January 23, 2021 at their regular public hearing. City Council amended the policy to include the following: **Require homeowners to maintain primary residence of the subject property at the time of ADU construction.**
 - b. Link to bullet a ([Accessory Dwelling Units in Alexandria | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#))

- c. Mr Teran is on record (4 Jan meeting) stating he WILL NOT live at the property
- 3. It fails 12-401: Applicants disregard for the community and neighbors is egregious as this two-dwelling design is 100% out of character for the neighborhood and immediate area.
 - a. It does not meet the basic standard of the neighborhood and surrounding area
- 4. There is no frontage. This is uncharacteristic of any other house in Del Ray and increases foot traffic in an active alley raising the risk of pedestrian accidents
 - a. Safety will decrease due to increased traffic in an alley not built with visual clearances
 - b. Trash trucks, firetrucks, UPS, FEDEX, etc are not able to enter the alleyway
- 5. Planning commission vote was 4-3; resulting in a controversial approval
- 6. Planning commission was misguided when comparing lots, comparing lot sizes with street frontage with this application with a lot with no street frontage (as every teacher in our school district would say "Apple and Oranges")
- 7. All immediate neighbors are against this build
 - a. Would you want a house built behind a dozen homes?

I am unable to attend the 24 FEB meeting but am sending this e-mail with the hope you take it into consideration and deny this application.

V/r,

-raj and kim singh

Raj Singh
 Department of Homeland Security
 OFFICE: Microsoft Teams
 MOBILE: 202.897.8175
 e-mail: raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov

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First time users may need to click link twice to activate.
 For help with the survey email HRMS.BusinessAnalytics@hq.dhs.gov

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Ann Kammerer <ann.kod@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 05, 2024 9:38 PM
To: Justin Wilson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Amy Jackson; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Opposition to SUP #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Ave.

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Dear Alexandria City Council Members

I'm writing again to express my opposition to the SUP application for development at 404a E. Alexandria Ave in Del Ray.

I've lived at 1403 Mt Vernon Ave, a nearly adjacent property to the one in question, since 1998.

The design of the house and ADU, the undersized lot, and the lack of street frontage, are not keeping with the surrounding neighborhood. In response to neighbors' concerns about the street frontage issue and size of the lot, city staff gave comparisons to townhouses in the surrounding area, not to single family homes. Staff also admitted there are no houses in the surrounding area without street frontage.

The developers have indicated that they don't intend to live on the property. They'll be renting the property, and the ADU, which will exacerbate already tight parking in the area. Doesn't the person applying for the ADU permit need to reside in the house at the time the ADU permit is sought?

There is a legitimate concern on the part of all the neighbors that this development is going to have an impact on water runoff and flooding of our residences. It will also negatively affect our property values.

The lack of street frontage, safety concerns regarding fire service access, and past flooding issues all weigh on my feelings about the project.

It's worth noting that Del Ray Citizens Association recommended that the SUP be rejected--which staff left out of their report summary. And that the Planning Commission vote was a close 4-3 vote.

And lastly, this entire process from the start has been marred by lack of communication and haphazard community engagement. (For example, I was not contacted at all about staff's plans to meet with neighbors at the site earlier in February.)

I urge you to reject this SUP application.

Ann Kammerer
1403 Mt Vernon Ave
Alexandria VA 22301
703-732-0012

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: MD Lim <markdlim@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 7:43 PM
To: Amy Jackson; Justin Wilson
Cc: John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]2/24 Council Public Hearing: Opposition to SUP 2023-00076 (404A E. Alexandria Ave)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from markdlim@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor Justin Wilson, Vice Mayor Amy Jackson, and Honorable Members of the City Council for the City of Alexandria,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my recommendation to reject the Special Use Permit #2023-00076 that will be discussed as item #12 on the docket for City Council's Public Hearing on February 24, 2024. I submitted my written testimony via the City Council portal on Alexandrava.gov and pasted it below, welcoming any opportunity to share my perspective or answer any questions.

Respectfully,
Mark
1407 Mount Vernon Avenue

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your leadership representing the interests of our community. As the final check-and-balance to a process that seems to be steam-rolled by City Staff and the Applicant, I ask you to reject the Special Use Permit application #2023-00076 at the City Council hearing on February 24, 2024, as Docket # 24-1854. Below my signature is my written testimony for the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024. Rather than repeat that letter, I wanted to further share why I recommend that you consider rejecting this application.

My residence will be directly impacted if this substandard lot is developed as designed in the application. The lack of community engagement and disregard for community opinion by the Applicant and Department of Planning and Zoning Staff remains appalling. Those affected by this application remain united in opposition, as shown by: Mayor Wilson's comments at the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024 (quoted below); an Alexandria Times article calling this a "contentious issue" on January 17, 2024; a split 4-3 vote by the Planning Commission on January 4, 2023; and formal opposition by the Del Ray Citizen's Association sent to the Department of Planning and Zoning on November 20, 2023. Amongst this public opposition and contention, the Applicant and Staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning have not offered a forum for discussion or resolution.

None of the letters supporting this application were authored by affected neighbors, except for one who welcomed "new neighbors in our immediate area and the diversity in housing". As the applicant responded to Planning Commissioner Koenig's question on January 4, 2024 (4 hrs : 9 mins) "Ideally our plan would be to rent it long term, year lease" without mention in the application or subsequent reports that this development would be rented at below-market rates. This property is not an example of Zoning For Housing, a vision of which I'm supportive as the City continues to grow. But, that vision is disingenuously applied in this letter of support and by the Staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning who justified their recommendation against the opposition of Del Ray Citizen's Association at the Planning Commission Public Hearing. Zoning for Housing should include sincere engagement of the community and the steam-rolling to advance this specific application is an example of what not to do.

As Mayor Wilson said at the City Council's Public Hearing (2 hrs : 56 mins), "There has been considerable disagreement between the applicant and residents...let me encourage the applicant and the neighbors to get together...and have some conversation about the areas of disagreement and see what possible could be agreed to." My neighbors who would be negatively impacted if this permit is approved represent different interests in this City's growth. However, this lack of engagement by the Department of Planning and Zoning staff and Applicant has brought us together to learn and share what is happening at 404-A E. Alexandria Avenue. It was through these forums that I learned: a) about the application and potential impact to my residence (only one paper sign was posted in a non-obvious location on E. Alexandria Avenue, a sign that has been missing for weeks), b) that some neighbors reached out to the Department of Planning and Zoning and not received a response, and c) that not all impacted neighbors received an invitation to the one-and-only introduction by the Applicant in November 2023. This meant that we had to quickly learn about the utility of a Special Use Permit and the review process, search historical public records of our residence and community, and provide testimonies to Del Ray Citizen's Association, Planning Commission, and City Council. Beyond those forums and particularly given the public perception of this issue, the applicant and/or staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning had multiple opportunities and ample time to do outreach but failed to do so. Instead, we learn about updates on the Staff Report through formal reports submitted to dockets of the City Council Public Hearings.

The Applicant and the City Staff have not reached out to me, even though my email address is publicly available as written testimony. Another missed opportunity was at the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024, where about 20 of us planned to provide verbal testimony or support. Upon learning about the delay, we all met in the overflow room to discuss next steps. The Applicant entered the room, saw all of us and instead of joining the discussion, left the room to consult with Mr. Sam Shelby of the Department of Planning and Zoning who waited in the hallway. The door to the overflow room is glass and we were at the entrance, so they could not have missed us as I clearly saw them in discussion. But, both left without saying a word, missing an opportunity for transparent discussion and furthering concerns that City Staff sides with the Applicant and are not interested in talking with us.

Instead, Planning Director Mr. Karl E. Moritz reached out to two neighbors by email on Friday, February 16, 2024, at 5:19 p.m. EST, asking to meet. This outreach, one week prior to the City Council Public Hearing, three weeks after Mayor Wilson's recommendation, and after 5pm on the Friday before a three-day weekend, can be seen as nothing but devious. I did not receive this invitation. Fortunately, we developed an email list among affected neighbors after the City Council meeting, with many of us changing our Saturday plans to meet with Mr. Moritz and Mr. Shelby with less than 24 hours notice. When I asked Mr. Moritz why I wasn't invited to the discussion, he said that he didn't have my email address (I had to remind him about the written testimony) and that he was planning on going door-to-door. Their unannounced door-to-door campaign on the Saturday of a three-day weekend would have occurred *after* meeting my neighbors. None of this makes practical sense and furthers speculation that this was a last-minute and insincere attempt to "check the box" on engaging the community a week before the postponed Public Hearing.

As mentioned in my original testimony, I remain concerned about the increased underground flooding to my basement and the increased risk to pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic on Mount Vernon Avenue. At the impromptu Saturday meeting, Mr. Moritz and Mr. Shelby did not provide comment on the flooding potential and seemed to agree with the poor visibility of cross pedestrian and vehicular traffic after we walked down the alley, acknowledging that this may be the only alley on Mt Vernon Avenue that is in-the-middle of a block. Given their lack of engagement, I was still disappointed that neither were prepared to answer those concerns, even though it was raised in several written testimonies submitted by myself and others.

Again, thank you for your leadership and opportunity to provide my comments in advance of the discussion on February 24, 2024. Please do not hesitate to email me at markdlim@gmail.com if you have any questions about the content of this testimony, the one submitted for the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024 (pasted below), or would like to discuss my frustration on the lack of engagement by the Applicant and staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (and Yashin Lin)
1407 Mount Vernon Avenue

Previous written testimony sent to City Council Members for January 20, 2024 hearing

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your continued service representing the best interests of our community. Change is not easy, particularly for a city with extensive historical roots, and as you steer our City through Northern Virginia's growth, I remain proud of your leadership in ensuring that Alexandria maintains a healthy and inclusive community.

The health of our community has embodied a personal obligation to contribute through community service. To date, I have volunteered over 400 hours to the Alexandria Health Department's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team. This includes weekends supporting and supervising: annual mass influenza vaccination events, several COVID-19 mass testing events, large COVID-19 vaccine clinics that immunized over a thousand community members to smaller clinics in neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic, and pediatric vaccine clinics. I also volunteered at the Health Department's COVID-19 call center and as a COVID-19 contract tracer and case investigator. These opportunities gave me a unique opportunity to cross paths with other Alexandrians from different walks of life, and I have left every event prouder of being a resident of this City.

However, I am writing to express my disappointment at the lack of community engagement or consideration by the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Alexandria Planning Commission on the application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Avenue. I only learned about changes in the original application through public filings of the final document, interpreting these documents as a non-subject matter expert with other impacted neighbors, and attending the Planning Commission meeting on January 4, 2024. Beyond these filings and forum, we were never given an opportunity to learn about changes, exchange concerns, or explore alternatives with the City Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant, even though my residence and those of my neighbors would be negatively affected by this new single-family residence with a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit.

This lengthy letter seems to be the last opportunity for community-level input. The first and only-opportunity for dialogue was hosted by the Del Ray Citizen Association (DRCA), which did its job in allowing for deliberation and voting in opposition to this SUP (re. letter sent to Mr. Moritz, Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning). But, instead of following up with DRCA's letter and those of my neighbors, the Department of Planning and Zoning responded through a final report that recommended approval of the SUP permit. Not only did their official report not address the significant concerns in those letters, it only raised more questions. We only wished for dialogue and the Planning and Zoning Staff didn't respond to our requests. Adding to the sting was that we first learned about adaptations at the Planning Commission meeting, after the Staff filed their report and recommendations.

I am in full agreement with my neighbor's and DRCA's concerns and since there is no other opportunity for dialogue with the Planning and Zoning Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant. I am presenting my main concerns through this letter and hopefully as verbal testimony to you, as our City Council.

- Firstly, our residences are part of the Hooffs Run Watershed that sit on-top of underground streams that drain into the very-active Hooffs Run. Most of the recent flooding events, specifically those off Monroe Avenue and off Commonwealth Avenue in the Rosemont Neighborhood, are associated with our watershed. The streams immediately underneath and surrounding our residences have not been disturbed since our multi-unit townhomes were built in the late 1930's with sump pumps being a necessity. My sump pump routinely runs multiple times during dry periods and almost continuously during rain and snow events. It also takes several days for the large "puddles" on the 404A E Alexandria lot to absorb into the ground after a modest rain event, confirming that the soil is already water-logged by active streams with little capacity for additional run-off. Building a solid structure that runs to the edge of the lot with a predominantly underground footprint will stress these active sub-terrain streams. Since our townhomes are below 404A E Alexandria, it is highly likely that the streams will be diverted and focused into our basements if the proposed building is constructed. My own sump pump is unlikely to handle increased demand and I would predict that putting in a single-family home at 404A E

Alexandria could make the surrounding ten homes unlivable given their age and cost for reinforced infrastructure.

- Secondly, the only vehicular access to the proposed unit is through a small public alley off Mount Vernon Avenue. Approving this permit will increase the danger to our immediate community by converting a lightly-used alleyway into an active vehicular thoroughfare. Driving onto Mount Vernon Avenue from this alley means that the driver must first cross an active sidewalk connecting the Braddock Road Metro Station, GW Middle School, and the rest of Alexandria to Del Ray's "downtown" core. Then, the driver must carefully navigate onto Mount Vernon Avenue after passing parked cars at the edge of the alley entrance, with additional effort that car and bicycle cross-traffic is aware given that the entrance is not obvious (as it is in the middle of the block) or visible from the street. There have been several occasions of cars blocking the alley because visitors thought it was a viable parking spot. The City's refuse, recycling, and compost collection staff also will not attempt to drive down the alley and instead service our townhomes by parking on Alexandria Avenue and walking down the alley. The detached Accessory Dwelling Unit described in the SUP application has its own dedicated kitchen and laundry in addition to those within the main building, elevating concern that the proposed construction is for two separately-resided buildings. This alley and its intersection with the sidewalk and Mount Vernon Avenue is not designed for the likely increased traffic pressure introduced by two new family units at 404A E Alexandria and regular services such as Amazon or other delivery providers.
- Most shockingly, during verbal testimony provided by the staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning at the Planning Commission meeting, one significant justification for their final recommendation was based on the proposed goals of Zoning For Housing/Housing For All (ZFH). My love of the diversity and inclusivity of this City should show that I am in full support of ZFH and I applaud the Council's leadership on this issue. However, the residence described in the application for this SUP does not address the vision as it is proposed as a single-family residence (although this counters the design, as mentioned above) that the applicant testified is intended to be a rental. If these are rented, I highly doubt these will be offered at sub-market rental rates as this is not described anywhere. The intended use and design of these buildings are not the model that should represent the vision of ZFH and it is insincere to make that claim. I remain disappointed that these City Staff wanted to distract the lack of substance in their report by politicizing an issue unrelated to this SUP application.

Our family focused our housing search on Alexandria when we were moving back to this region after several years in Seattle. After living in eight different cities, Alexandria is the only city I have ever wanted to put down roots, a commitment that resulted in the purchase of our first home. The past five years have been nothing but amazing, including new routines of weekend walks throughout Alexandria's diverse neighborhoods, enjoying the multitude of cuisines from Old Town and Arlandria to the West End, and partaking in multiple events, festivals, farmer's markets, and local theater. We typically find ourselves comparing Alexandria during our vacations, often to the detriment of the cities we're visiting.

As you review this SUP application and my comments, I also ask the City Council to recognize that this review process lacked transparency and community engagement, with concerns filed by my neighbors and DRCA remaining unaddressed. This process has been disappointingly frustrating, and I am speaking as a resident who loves Alexandria and the community represented by its residents and dedicated civil servants.

Again, thanks for this opportunity to voice my concerns. I welcome a call, email, or opportunity to meet if you have any questions about the content of this letter or want to learn more about my concerns about this application or the lack of transparency and engagement in its review.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (with Yashin Lin)
1407 Mt Vernon Ave

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Ann Kammerer <ann.kod@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 9:49 PM
To: Justin Wilson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Amy Jackson; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP at 404A E Alexandria Ave. in Del Ray

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ann.kod@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear City Council

I'm writing to express my opposition to the SUP application for development at 404a E. Alexandria Ave in Del Ray.

I've lived at 1403 Mt Vernon Ave, a nearly adjacent property to the one in question, since 1998. The plans for the structure feel very out of keeping with the rest of the surrounding neighborhood. The developers have indicated that they don't intend to live on the property. The lack of street frontage, safety concerns regarding fire service access, and past flooding issues all weigh on my feelings about the project. The proposed house and the ADU, which would be used for short term rental, do not address the tight parking issues in the area, and again, are not in keeping with the neighborhood feel.

I hope that you will oppose granting this project.

Ann Kammerer
1403 Mt Vernon Ave
Alexandria VA 22301

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Singh, Raj <raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 15, 2024 3:03 PM
To: Justin Wilson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Amy Jackson; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP #2023-00076: SAY NO to 404A East Alexandria on 24 FEB
Attachments: 11.20.23 404A E. Alexandria Ave SUP Letter to PC - Google Docs.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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My name is Raj Singh and I am the owner of 404 E Alexandria. I am writing, *again*, in opposition of the Special Use Permission (SUP) application for 404 A E Alexandria lot (Applicants: Eric Teran and Daniela Gross).

1. Del Ray Citizens Association recommended not supporting SUP (see attached file)
2. Building an ADU is against zoning code as this is not their primary resident nor will it be at project start.
 - a. City Council approved ADU policy on January 23, 2021 at their regular public hearing. City Council amended the policy to include the following: Require homeowners to maintain primary residence of the subject property at the time of ADU construction.
 - b. Link to bullet a ([Accessory Dwelling Units in Alexandria | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#))
 - c. Mr Teran is on record (4 Jan meeting) stating he WILL NOT live at the property
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 - a. It does not meet the basic standard of the neighborhood and surrounding area
4. There is no frontage. This is uncharacteristic of any other house in Del Ray and increases foot traffic in an active alley raising the risk of pedestrian accidents
 - a. Safety will decrease due to increased traffic in an alley not built with visual clearances
 - b. Trash trucks, firetrucks, UPS, FEDEX, etc are not able to enter the alleyway
5. Planning commission vote was 4-3; resulting in a controversial approval
6. Planning commission was misguided when comparing lots, comparing lot sizes with street frontage with this application with a lot with no street frontage (as every teacher in our school district would say "Apple and Oranges")
7. Most, if not all, immediate neighbors are against this build
 - a. Would you want a house built behind a dozen homes?

I am unable to attend the 24 FEB meeting but am sending this e-mail with the hope you take it into consideration and deny this application.

V/r,

-raj and kim singh

Raj Singh

Department of Homeland Security
OFFICE: Microsoft Teams
MOBILE: 202.897.8175
e-mail: raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov

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Nov. 20, 2023

Karl W. Moritz, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
City Hall, Room 2100
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: SUP2023-00076
404A E. Alexandria Ave

Dear Mr. Moritz,

At the Nov. 8 membership meeting, the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA) voted to oppose the new single family residence with a "detached" Accessory Dwelling Unit on a substandard lot at 404 E Alexandria Ave for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project does not meet the historical development pattern of Del Ray by not having street frontage.
2. Fire truck and life safety emergency access to the site.
3. Stormwater management on the site due to the historical flooding concentrated on the western end of the 400 block of E. Alexandria Ave.
4. The exclusion of the basement from the FAR calculation and setbacks is questionable as we do not think it meets the zoning requirements for being below the average grade calculation based on the proposed basement exterior walls in the courtyard.
5. Utility impact on the neighbors due to the numerous overhead electrical wires, the outflow connection for stormwater, and the construction issues with the site.
6. Impact of proposed construction on trees both on city owned and neighbors' properties.





7. Vision clearance at alley entrances.

The Del Ray Citizens Association Land Use Committee (DRCA LUC) held a public Zoom meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023. The applicant presented the SUP application that had been submitted to the City. Members of the community who were in attendance were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. On Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023, during the regular DRCA Zoom membership meeting, an abbreviated presentation was made and the motion set forth by the LUC was discussed.

The historical development pattern in Del Ray is to have houses that front on a street. Although alley homes exist in Old Town, it is not part of Del Ray's development and the proposal was not supported.

One of the main concerns of the neighbors was the potential restricted fire and life safety emergency vehicle access to the site due to the fact it does not have street frontage. The public alleys are only 10' wide and even the trash and recycling trucks cannot make it through the alleys. The various contractors currently pull the trash & recycle cans down the alley to the trucks parked on the street as the alley is too narrow.

The western end of E. Alexandria Ave near Mt. Vernon Ave has experienced numerous major floods during rain storms. The applicant was advised that the subterranean courtyard they are proposing will be exposed to flooding when these storms occur, with the potential of 3 -4 feet of stormwater entering the house as has happened to other residences. While it is conceivable that stormwater management features could mitigate the rain that could build up in the courtyard, it will take more than a sump pump dumping water onto grade to control the water. Tying into city storm drains will be necessary, and it is unclear at this time how the applicant would propose to deal with the water.

The project as designed is dependent on the basement square footage being excluded from the FAR calculation, and the assumption that because the basement does not count as FAR, the ADU is considered detached even though there are continuous interior spaces between the primary dwelling and the ADU. The LUC questioned whether the basement would comply for being below the average grade calculation. In addition, the setbacks do





not appear to be in compliance. It appears the foundation will project into the public alleys for the portion of the basement that is shown against the property lines.

The neighbors were also concerned about the numerous overhead electrical lines that supply power to their homes. The lines are fed off of a power pole that is at the north end of the project site and criss-cross overhead. Although the applicant stated he had had discussions with Dominion Power, an actual plan for how their homes would remain in service cannot be developed until the project is approved and the neighbors were left questioning what would happen.

There are also construction issues to be addressed in accessing the site due to the narrow alleys. The proposed structures encompass most of the site and there is not enough site available to use for staging during construction. The applicant stated that craning building materials over the row houses on Mt. Vernon was not feasible.

There are three trees on adjacent property whose root zones would be impacted by the retaining walls of the subterranean courtyard. Two are in the rear corners of 404 and 406 E. Alexandria and the other is on City-owned property adjacent to the site. The applicant has had discussions with the City Arborist about the City owned tree, but it appears the trees on the neighbors' properties have not been addressed.

Lastly, though an existing condition, the vision clearances at the alley entrances was pointed out by the neighbors as being potentially hazardous.

While we understand that the applicant is treating this as a feasibility study and does not want to invest too much time or money into the project before confirming if it is a buildable lot, the DRCA feels like there are too many unanswered variables regarding the proposed house and substandard lot. For these reasons, we cannot support the application.

During the meeting, the applicant stated that he intended to rent out the house and ADU. This information brought up the question of how this could be allowed, as zoning code section 7-203.B.6 Accessory dwellings, states that "the owner of the property shall maintain the property as their primary residence at the time the permit required by



BRINGING NEIGHBORS TOGETHER

7-203(A), above, is issued.” Requiring owner occupancy of either the primary dwelling or the ADU was of paramount importance when the DRCA originally supported the ADU ordinance. This was in order to control the use of the ADU and to discourage both units on a property being used for short-term rentals (VRBO and AirBnBs). Staff revealed that there was no formalized method for determining primary residence and that there was a Staff-level interpretation made on how to handle a proposal for both a new house and new ADU built on a vacant lot. It seems the primary residence requirement is effectively being ignored by this interpretation policy. This was quite a surprise to members of the DRCA and is something that needs clarification to both staff and the community. We are concerned that lack of enforcement of the primary residence requirement will lead to the majority of ADUs being used as short-term rentals, or by a developer to build out the maximum envelope of a site pushing the sale price higher, rather than providing additional affordable housing. Learning that there is not a homeowner living on site to talk to about mis-use of the ADU degrades the quality of life for those living adjacent to the property. We realize that the ADU topic deserves discussion separate from the SUP proposal under review, and would like to request that it be addressed with a written response to the DRCA outlining the current enforcement of the code.

Sincerely,

Kristine Hesse, DRCA LUC Co-Chair
Lisa Lettieri, DRCA LUC Co-Chair

Katie Waynick
DRCA President

cc: Sam Shelby, P & Z
Rachel Drescher, P & Z
Eric Teran, Eustilus Architects



Dear City Councilmembers:

We write to express our opposition to the Special Use Permit (“SUP”) application regarding 404A East Alexandria Avenue (SUP, #2023-00076, Docket #10 at the January 20, 2024, City Council meeting). This application does not conform with Alexandria Zoning for Housing and City Building Codes. The application has also subverted important community engagement processes and fails to account for the substantial impacts that this unique property will have on numerous adjoining neighbors. For the reasons set forth below we respectfully request that you reject this application.

1. The application violates Alexandria’s Zoning Ordinance

The application is in direct violation of at least two regulations under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria (“Zoning Ordinance”). First, Article VII, § 7-203(B)(6) states that, for an accessory dwelling unit (“ADU”) to be permissible, “the owner of the property shall maintain the property as their primary residence at the time the permit . . . is issued.” The proposed building plan is a two-story single family dwelling with an ADU. The applicants have maintained that they do not plan to use the property as their primary residence. Accordingly, the proposal does not conform with the City’s zoning requirements for ADU’s and the application should be rejected on this ground alone.

Second, the application violates the Zoning Ordinance at Article III, § 3-505 related to R-2-5/Single and two-family because it does not meet the minimum lot size requirements. § 3-505 specifies the following in relevant part:

- *Lot size.* Each principal use shall be located on a lot with a minimum land area of 5,000 square feet, except in the case of a corner lot in which case the minimum land area shall be 6,500 square feet. § 3-505(A)(1)
- *Lot frontage.* The minimum lot frontage at the front lot line shall be 40 feet, except in the case of a two-family semi-detached dwelling, in which case the minimum lot frontage shall be 37.5 feet for each dwelling unit. § 3-505(C).

The lot is 2,600 square feet and therefore fails to meet the minimum lot size requirements of 5,000 feet under § 3-505(A)(1). The lot also does not possess any lot frontage contemplated by § 3-505(C), as it occurs in an alley surrounded by existing dwellings. The Staff acknowledges that this would be the only developed lot in Del Ray without frontage. Notably, the previous property owners inquired about building on the property and the Director of Planning and Zoning at the time made an official determination that the lot did not possess the buildable street frontage, and the property was previously determined unbuildable by the City. Accordingly the proposal fails to meet the minimum lot frontage requirements.

The proposal should be rejected based on noncompliance with the City’s Zoning Code.

2. The applicants failed to initiate the proper community engagement processes

The City Council should also consider the lack of consultation with the affected neighbors. Communication from the applicants was limited to a one-time and one-sided dialogue. The applicants did not solicit feedback or engage with community members about their concerns related to the project.

Our residence at 404 East Alexandria Ave, for example, will be uniquely impacted by the dwelling’s construction. The address of the proposed structure is 404A East Alexandria Ave. The property confusingly possesses the appearance of being an ADU to our residence at 404 East Alexandria Ave. Access to 404A East Alexandria is via Mount Vernon Avenue pursuant to the proposed plan for access. In fact, vehicles can’t fit through the alley via East Alexandria Avenue. This inconsistency creates a dangerous confusion that will interfere with our use and enjoyment of our residence. The applicants have not consulted with us to ensure that potential confusion (*i.e.* mail, deliveries, and short-term renters) that the apparent shared address will create.

Further, it appears that the current proposal diverges from the original filing, which the impacted neighbors only learned through public filings. The impacted community was never given an opportunity to voice concerns to the applicant or the City Planning Commission until the January 4, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting regarding whether the project should move forward – a step in the process too late for the applicant or commission to properly evaluate alternatives.

The lack of consultation and transparency with us and the other surrounding residents underscores the rushed nature of the proposal. At a minimum, the council should defer a decision on the project so that the impacted residents can be consulted with.

3. The application fails to account for environmental impacts

As stated by others impacted residents, the hydrologic formation under the lot results in large quantities of water being diverted from our residences via highly active sump pumps. Our sump pump for instance runs almost constantly during rain events and its frequent use requires substantial maintenance and repair. The proposal does not account for the diversion of water and impact to Hooffs Run and our homes’ infrastructure. An environmental review of this impact should be conducted before the City Council considers whether to approve the project.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request that you reject the the proposal under SUP, #2023-00076.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jonah and Sarah Brown
404 East Alexandria Ave, Alexandria, VA, 22301

10
1-20-24

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Eric Weiner <ejw77@me.com>
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 6:33 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; PlanComm
Cc: Leah Kegler; Angela Rice; Angela Welsh; ERNEST PICKELL; Ken Boland; annasmiller@yahoo.com; Atilla Sarah; Bridget Donohue; Brett Rice; cherie marfori; Cindy Savery; Debbie Sikes; erniepickell@gmail.com; Fred Hauchman; Ingrid Jud Allen; Benji; maryannring@comcast.net; Mary Reding; nadine@thebolands.net; Nellie Hauchman; Peter Savery; Sonia Teran; Family; Sarah Kocsis; Vince Delagarde; Atilla Kocsis
Subject: [EXTERNAL]January 20 City Council Public Hearing_Opposition to Special Use Permit # 2023-00076 - 404A E Alexandria Ave

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Dear Alexandria City Council Members,

The Alexandria Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 4th to consider a request for a special use permit (#2023-00076) to construct what can only be described as an unwelcome "Frankenstein" bunker/house at 404A E Alexandria Ave. Despite unanimous opposition voiced by several residents living near the property, the Planning Commission voted 4-3 to approve the permit.

We live down the street from this property at 414 E Alexandria Ave. We purchased a single family home here a few years back in large part because of charm and character of the street. Beautiful craftsman style homes with manicured lawns and flower gardens line the street and Japanese cherry and maple trees bloom in the spring and fall.

The proposed structure at 414A will have none of this quality or charm and the owner intends for this to be a transient, short-term rental property, not a thoughtful addition to the neighborhood. It would also be a nuisance for our neighbors on Mt. Vernon Ave. who depend on the alley for entry/exit and waste services.

We join our numerous fellow neighbors on E Alexandria Ave. and Mt. Vernon Ave. in opposing this proposed construction for the reasons outlined below. We also invite you to visit the micro-lot at 404A and see for yourselves where developer Eric Teran intends to brute-force a dwelling between existing property lines.

If you visit, you will see why no one developed this property. Please see the attached photos to give you an idea.

Our Primary reasons for opposition include:

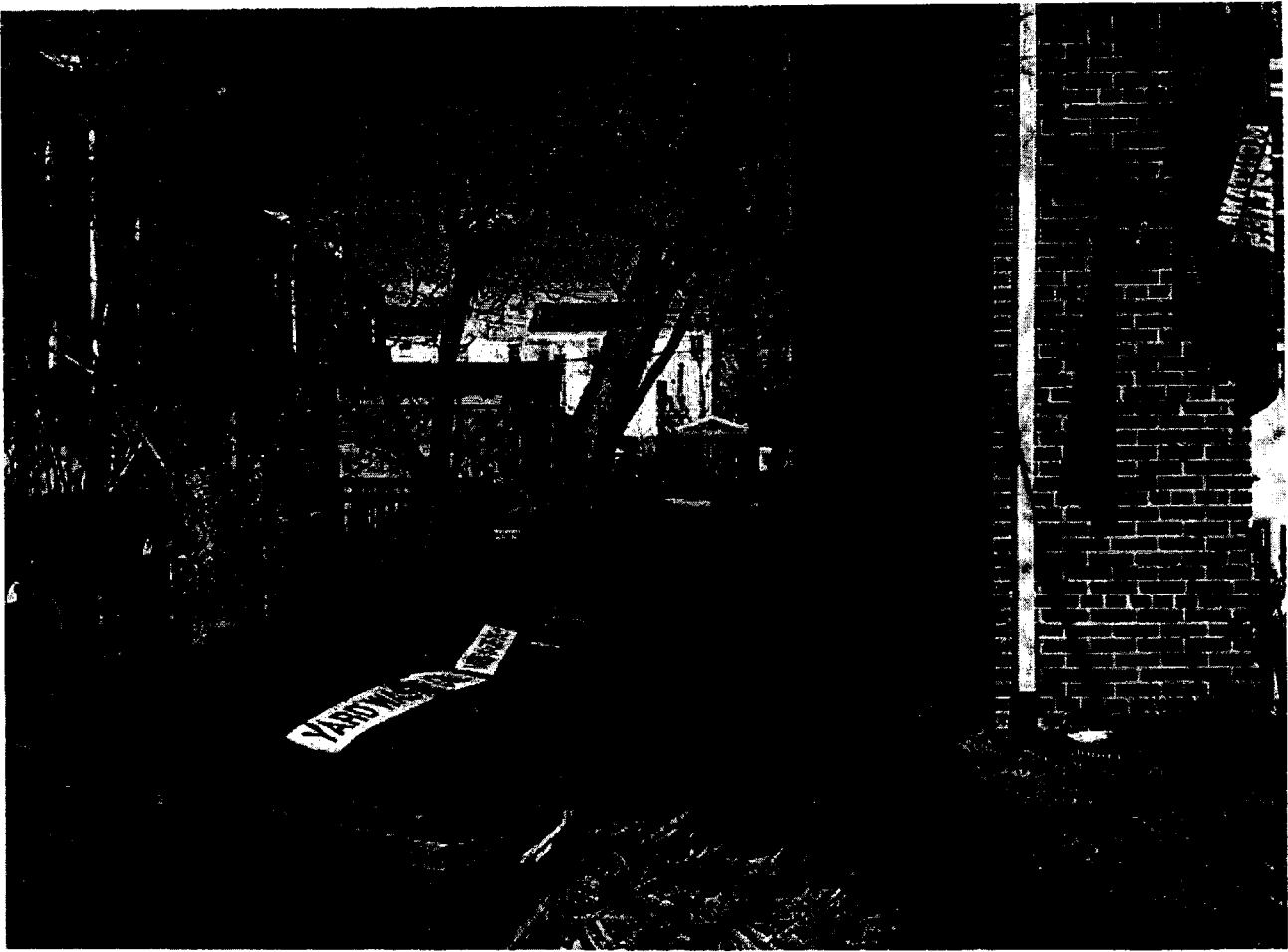
- This project does not fit with the character of Del Ray
- The plan will kill the large, 100+ year old tree on the adjacent property and the only consequence for killing it is to replace it with a 2in diameter tree + a \$200 penalty - this is unacceptable
- Stormwater management will not be able to keep up ...70% of the proposed home is underground and will flood and the lack of a street to run the water to will invariably flood the adjacent properties.
- Mt. Vernon Ave. and East Alexandria Ave lack sufficient parking to support this proposed dwelling. There is also insufficient space for construction vehicles/equipment to safely stage at the lot.

- Three of the four alleys surrounding the home are unimproved and don't provide access to the home
- If approved, this project would set a terrible precedent whereby builders and developers will build similarly ugly structures that will divide existing lots.
- This lot has no street frontage and the fire department would not have the necessary access for timely emergency response
- Eric Teran and Daniela Gross are developers looking to make a profit rather than live in a Del Ray home that retains the character of the neighborhood. When challenged at the planning commission meeting, Eric Teran said he would just get permits from the city to achieve his construction plan. His responses made it clear that he is not giving serious consideration to the real issues his proposed project will create for the people living in our neighborhood.

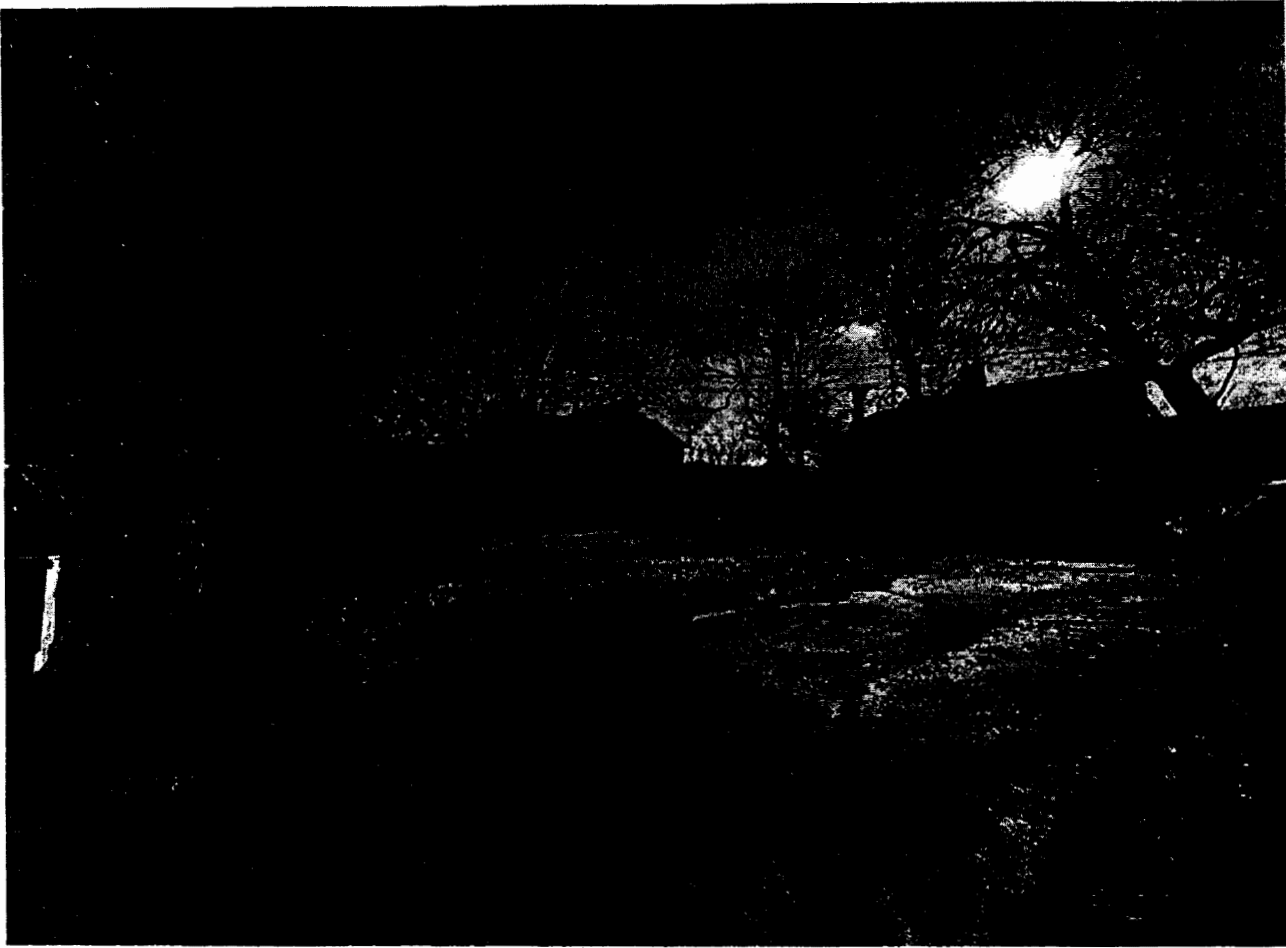
Please vote to oppose this project.

Thank you.

Eric Weiner and Leah Kegler







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From: Eric Weiner eiw77@me.com

Sent: Thursday January 4, 2024 7:58 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Opposition to Special Use Permit #2023-00067 - 404A E Alexandria Ave

Good evening Mr. Pierce and Planning Commission Members,

We live at 414 E Alexandria Ave and we are participating in the public hearing via Zoom. We are writing to express our total opposition to the granting of Special Use Permit #2023-00067 - 404A E Alexandria Ave.

Some of our main reasons for opposition include:

- This project does not fit with the character of Del Ray

- The plan will kill the large, 100+ year old tree on the adjacent property and the only consequence for killing it is to replace it with a 2in diameter tree + a \$200 penalty - this is unacceptable

- Stormwater management will not be able to keep up ...70% of the home is underground and will flood and the lack of a street to run the water to will invariably flood the adjacent properties.

- East Alexandria Ave lacks sufficient parking to support this proposed dwelling

- Three of the four alleys surrounding the home are unimproved and don't provide access to the home

- If approved, this project would set a terrible precedent whereby builders and developers will build similarly ugly structures that will divide existing lots.

- This lot has no street frontage and the fire department would not have the necessary access for timely emergency response

- Eric Teran and Daniela Gross are investors looking to make a profit rather than live in a Del Ray home that retains the character of the neighborhood

Thank you to you and the planning commission for considering our concerns and opposition,

Eric Weiner and Leah Kegler

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your continued service representing the best interests of our community. Change is not easy, particularly for a city with extensive historical roots, and as you steer our City through Northern Virginia's growth, I remain proud of your leadership in ensuring that Alexandria maintains a healthy and inclusive community.

The health of our community has embodied a personal obligation to contribute through community service. To date, I have volunteered over 400 hours to the Alexandria Health Department's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team. This includes weekends supporting and supervising: annual mass influenza vaccination events, several COVID-19 mass testing events, large COVID-19 vaccine clinics that immunized over a thousand community members to smaller clinics in neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic, and pediatric vaccine clinics. I also volunteered at the Health Department's COVID-19 call center and as a COVID-19 contract tracer and case investigator. These opportunities gave me a unique opportunity to cross paths with other Alexandrians from different walks of life, and I have left every event prouder of being a resident of this City.

However, I am writing to express my disappointment at the lack of community engagement or consideration by the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Alexandria Planning Commission on the application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Avenue. I only learned about changes in the original application through public filings of the final document, interpreting these documents as a non-subject matter expert with other impacted neighbors, and attending the Planning Commission meeting on January 4, 2024. Beyond these filings and forum, we were never given an opportunity to learn about changes, exchange concerns, or explore alternatives with the City Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant, even though my residence and those of my neighbors would be negatively affected by this new single-family residence with a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit.

This lengthy letter seems to be the last opportunity for community-level input. The first and only opportunity for dialogue was hosted by the Del Ray Citizen Association (DRCA), which did its job in allowing for deliberation and voting in opposition to this SUP (re. letter sent to Mr. Moritz, Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning). But, instead of following up with DRCA's letter and those of my neighbors, the Department of Planning and Zoning responded through a final report that recommended approval of the SUP permit. Not only did their official report not address the significant concerns in those letters, it only raised more questions. We only wished for dialogue and the Planning and Zoning Staff didn't respond to our requests. Adding to the sting was that we first learned about adaptations at the Planning Commission meeting, after the Staff filed their report and recommendations.

I am in full agreement with my neighbor's and DRCA's concerns and since there is no other opportunity for dialogue with the Planning and Zoning Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant. I am presenting my main concerns through this letter and hopefully as verbal testimony to you, as our City Council.

- Firstly, our residences are part of the Hooffs Run Watershed that sit on-top of underground streams that drain into the very-active Hooffs Run. Most of the recent flooding events, specifically those off Monroe Avenue and off Commonwealth Avenue in the Rosemont Neighborhood, are associated with our watershed. The streams immediately underneath and surrounding our residences have not been disturbed since our multi-unit townhomes were built in the late 1930's with sump pumps being a necessity. My sump pump routinely runs multiple

times during dry periods and almost continuously during rain and snow events. It also takes several days for the large “puddles” on the 404A E Alexandria lot to absorb into the ground after a modest rain event, confirming that the soil is already water-logged by active streams with little capacity for additional run-off. Building a solid structure that runs to the edge of the lot with a predominantly underground footprint will stress these active sub-terrain streams. Since our townhomes are below 404A E Alexandria, it is highly likely that the streams will be diverted and focused into our basements if the proposed building is constructed. My own sump pump is unlikely to handle increased demand and I would predict that putting in a single-family home at 404A E Alexandria could make the surrounding ten homes unlivable given their age and cost for reinforced infrastructure.

- Secondly, the only vehicular access to the proposed unit is through a small public alley off Mount Vernon Avenue. Approving this permit will increase the danger to our immediate community by converting a lightly-used alleyway into an active vehicular thoroughfare. Driving onto Mount Vernon Avenue from this alley means that the driver must first cross an active sidewalk connecting the Braddock Road Metro Station, GW Middle School, and the rest of Alexandria to Del Ray’s “downtown” core. Then, the driver must carefully navigate onto Mount Vernon Avenue after passing parked cars at the edge of the alley entrance, with additional effort that car and bicycle cross-traffic is aware given that the entrance is not obvious (as it is in the middle of the block) or visible from the street. There have been several occasions of cars blocking the alley because visitors thought it was a viable parking spot. The City’s refuse, recycling, and compost collection staff also will not attempt to drive down the alley and instead service our townhomes by parking on Alexandria Avenue and walking down the alley. The detached Accessory Dwelling Unit described in the SUP application has its own dedicated kitchen and laundry in addition to those within the main building, elevating concern that the proposed construction is for two separately-resided buildings. This alley and its intersection with the sidewalk and Mount Vernon Avenue is not designed for the likely increased traffic pressure introduced by two new family units at 404A E Alexandria and regular services such as Amazon or other delivery providers.
- Most shockingly, during verbal testimony provided by the staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning at the Planning Commission meeting, one significant justification for their final recommendation was based on the proposed goals of Zoning For Housing/Housing For All (ZFH). My love of the diversity and inclusivity of this City should show that I am in full support of ZFH and I applaud the Council’s leadership on this issue. However, the residence described in the application for this SUP does not address the vision as it is proposed as a single-family residence (although this counters the design, as mentioned above) that the applicant testified is intended to be a rental. If these are rented, I highly doubt these will be offered at sub-market rental rates as this is not described anywhere. The intended use and design of these buildings are not the model that should represent the vision of ZFH and it is insincere to make that claim. I remain disappointed that these City Staff wanted to distract the lack of substance in their report by politicizing an issue unrelated to this SUP application.

Our family focused our housing search on Alexandria when we were moving back to this region after several years in Seattle. After living in eight different cities, Alexandria is the only city I have ever wanted to put down roots, a commitment that resulted in the purchase of our first home. The past five years have been nothing but amazing, including new routines of weekend walks throughout Alexandria’s diverse neighborhoods, enjoying the multitude of cuisines from Old Town and Arlandria to the West End,

and partaking in multiple events, festivals, farmer's markets, and local theater. We typically find ourselves comparing Alexandria during our vacations, often to the detriment of the cities we're visiting.

As you review this SUP application and my comments, I also ask the City Council to recognize that this review process lacked transparency and community engagement, with concerns filed by my neighbors and DRCA remaining unaddressed. This process has been disappointingly frustrating, and I am speaking as a resident who loves Alexandria and the community represented by its residents and dedicated civil servants.

Again, thanks for this opportunity to voice my concerns. I welcome a call, email, or opportunity to meet if you have any questions about the content of this letter or want to learn more about my concerns about this application or the lack of transparency and engagement in its review.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (with Yashin Lin)

1407 Mt Vernon Ave

markdim@gmail.com

January 18, 2024

RE: Opposition to SUP for 404A E Alexandria Ave, Docket 10

Dear Members of the Alexandria City Council,

I am writing to bring to your attention crucial information and concerns raised by the community regarding the Special Use Permit (SUP) application for the proposed development at 404A. The Planning Commission public hearing on January 4, 2024, revealed several points that necessitate a more thorough and objective examination of this project. Opposition to this SUP includes dozens of surrounding neighbors, the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA), and its Land Committee. All have strongly requested the denial of this SUP, signaling the need for the City Council's intervention.

The Planning Commission's 4 to 3 vote in favor of the SUP demonstrates the divisive nature of this proposal. The concerns outlined below highlight the potential adverse effects on our community if the SUP is approved:

Failure to Meet §12-401 (C): The proposed dwellings at 404A do not align with the existing neighborhood character, violating lot area and width requirements. The Contemporary style and lack of frontage are inconsistent with Del Ray's historical development. The CSRs admit this, but their rationale overlooks the unique nature of this alley lot, setting a problematic precedent for housing construction in our community.

Diminishing Property Values: The CSRs' assertion that 404A will not diminish surrounding property values lacks evidentiary support. The crowded-in backyard visual, impaired parking spaces, increased fire risks, stormwater runoff, and destruction of mature trees could all contribute to a reduction in value for neighboring homes. The proximity of 404A to narrow alleys poses challenges for emergency access, potentially lowering the future value of nearby properties.

FAR Calculation Inaccuracy: The DRCA warns that the design is dependent on an incorrect basement square footage exclusion from the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculation. Independent analysis is needed to verify the FAR calculation, ensuring compliance with zoning regulations.

Breach of ADU Rules: The admission by developers that they will not reside in either the primary residence or the ADU, but rather lease both out, violates zoning code section 7-203.B6. This breach undermines the intent of ADUs to provide affordable housing, setting a precedent for developers to use ADUs as profit centers going against the intent of the Affordable Housing for All policy.

Parking Concerns and "Party in a Box" Effect: The already crowded streets in our neighborhood face additional strain with the proposed development at 404A. Inadequate parking provisions and the potential for increased transient tenants could exacerbate

parking challenges. Furthermore, the box-like architecture raises concerns about creating a 'party in a box' effect in our backyards, disrupting the peace and harmony of the neighborhood.

Considering these concerns and the community's overwhelming opposition, I implore you to pause the approval of the SUP for 404A. This project, if approved, risks setting detrimental precedents and jeopardizing the unique character of Del Ray. Your intervention is crucial to ensuring the well-being and harmony of our neighborhood.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mary Reding
Concerned Property Owner and Neighbor
412 E Alexandria Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22301
(937) 609-4549

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Justin Reynolds <justinreynolds@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2024 7:30 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: Rachel M Drescher; Karl Moritz; Tony LaColla; Sam Shelby
Subject: [EXTERNAL]City Council Public Hearing: Docket No. 10

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers,

My family and I have lived in the city of Alexandria for 27 years. First I rented, then my wife and I moved into a townhome, and then were fortunate enough to move into a single-family home. Finding our single-family home was a difficult and cumbersome process as the housing stock was limited and there was virtually no vacant land to build on. The few lots that were available were constrained by existing site conditions such as streams, easements, and zoning regulations.

I am in support of this project for three reasons.

1. The city needs more housing. We have several friends who have been looking to move into Alexandria for years, but simply could not due to the limited availability of houses.
2. This home design is a truly innovative solution that creates an attractive home while thoughtfully maintaining access for neighbors and keeping a beautiful mature tree.
3. I understand that due to this creative design the project is only asking the council to review minor aspects of the project related to lot size and parking.

Respectfully,

Justin Reynolds
3970 Fort Worth Ave.

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Raj Singh <raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 9:13 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; Brett Rice; Angela Rice; Catharine Rice
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Special use permit 404-A E. Alexandria Ave – Substandard Lot without Street

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

[You don't often get email from raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

> ALCON,

>

> I'm writing, as the owner of 404 E Alexandria, Raj and Kim Singh, about the development behind our home. There is a reason it hasn't been built on all this time, and there is a real possibility three large mature trees will die. A 2500 fine or 2 inch tree replacement isn't an acceptable solution.

>

> I'm curious how will the construction equipment get to the site and where will it be stored? Both alleys leading to the site are too narrow. In addition, within Del Ray, I don't believe a home has been built with no street frontage, and the architecture of the home doesn't fit in with the area.

>

> The owner is a well known individual who owns several properties and lists them as short term rentals. While it's unknown if this will be a short term rental, one can take the available data and conclude it will be. I know homes are allowed to be STRs.... But allowing this doesn't adhere to more housing for residents if only tourists are using it.

>

> Two Del Ray committees stated no to building on this site, so it's also peculiar city council would go against the advice given.

>

> I'm available to talk, and I am against approving this special use permit.

>

> Raj and Kim

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From: Catharine Rice <catharine.rice@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 9:40 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP 2023-00076: Please say No to 404A E Alexandria on Jan 20
Attachments: Rough parameter of where two dwellings will be built.png; Applicant falsely depicts alleys as straight & clear-2.png; Applicant misrepresents Mt Vernon & rear alleys as straight and clear-1.JPG; Photo of 1413 Mt Vernon and alley perspectives-3.png; Photo of Mt Vernon and East Alexandria Alleys-4.png; 404A Supposed 10 ft back alley.png; DRCA-11.20.23 404A E. Alexandria Ave SUP Letter to PC.pdf

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This email is not showing up on your list. In fact, that of many of our neighbor who oppose are not showing up on your list. So here again!

Please put a pause on this SUP so it can be looked at more objectively. Twelve (12) surrounding neighbors and the **Del Ray Citizens Association and its Land Committee** (attached for easy viewing) have asked that this SUP be denied. That, and a 4 to 3 Planning Commission vote, evidences the need for Alexandria's city council to intervene and deny this ill-designed project. If you support the City Staff Reviewers (CSRs) request to approve, you will, in one fell swoop, establish new precedents for housing construction in Del Ray that are odds with our basic zoning guidelines, our commitment to the historic preservation of the character of Del Ray, the recent ADU rules, and the intent of our new Housing for All zoning rules to bring in new housing, but not by crowding up R-2-5 lots with multiple buildings.

1. It fails §12-401 (C)—These dwellings will not be compatible with the existing neighborhood character

Twelve (12) surrounding neighbors and Del Ray Citizens Association & its Land Use Committee have asked for rejection of this application, which wants to wedge two new dwellings into a substandard lot at 404A East Alexandria. 404A fails the lot area and width requirements and so **is a substandard lot which will not face, nor have any frontage on an actual street, in stark contradiction with the historical development of Del Ray. No such homes exist in Del Ray** and so this application is not compatible with the existing neighborhood character. The City's Staff Reviewers (CSRs) admit this, saying "this is the only alley lot in the Del Ray neighborhood," but they then overlooked this fact by rationalizing that the dwellings will be a smaller size and less visible from the road (Staff Report (SR), p.17, found [here](#)) That fails the test. 404A will also be a Contemporary style. There are no Contemporary designed homes in the neighborhood. The CSRs admit this (SR, p.14) but ignore it with the weak rationale that the home will be rectangular and have a gable roof (SR p.14)(!) They also fail to note that the low-pitched roof is also out of character with the neighborhood.

2. It fails §12-401 (C)—There are numerous indicators that these dwellings will diminish or impair established property values of surrounding homes: The CSRs simply state, with no proof or evidentiary support, that 4040A will not diminish or impair the established property value of surrounding homes. They simply state that the dwellings will increase the value of the land on which they are built, and by extension, this will increase similar size properties of the neighbors.

What the CSRs should have done is address how the value of the surrounding homes could easily face a reduction in value, or impaired future value, based on neighbors and DRCA observations, including: the tight physical crowding into their backyards, the impairment of existing parking spaces, the increased fire risks and stormwater runoff, and the destruction of mature trees. 404A will create a crowded-in, disconsonant backyard

visual for the surrounding townhouses, inconsistent with the rest of the neighborhood, which is characterized by homes facing the street, with greenery in the backyard. The Mt Vernon alley is narrow and not straight (despite applicants' drawings, see photos below); and pinches tightly around a large utility box and pole and curves to the East Alexandria alley. Due to the proximity of 404A resting tight against the East Alexandria alley, the townhouses on Mt Vernon street will have impaired access to their back parking spaces, removing value from their homes. The future value of the townhouses could be forced into stasis, due to their proximity to dwellings that will face increased fire risk. 1413 East Alexandria notes that 404A fails to meet the 100-foot emergency access requirement, (SR, p. 98) DRCA points out the narrow alleys are not even accessible by current garbage trucks, let alone fire trucks. (SR, p. 93) (The Applicants have asked for a reduction in the parking requirement from 2 to 1 car due to the difficulty of turning a car around in this site.) The CSRs note the applicant will need a waiver to fire codes during construction. (SR, p. 17). The Applicants admit they will be leasing both dwellings, and will not be living in them. The townhomes located so close to dwellings with transient tenants and impaired emergency access will be seen as less fire safe and of less value. The value of 1413 Mt Vernon will undoubtedly suffer—the owner noted that both the construction trucks and the short- and long-term dwelling lessees will end up using his driveway to turn around in due to the pinched off alley space. (SR, p. 98). Numerous neighbors and the DRCA note the heightened flooding in this area. 1413 Mt Vernon wrote that his home sits at the lowest point in the area, and 404A's increased impervious surface in this high flood zone, will send the flood waters toward his home. (SR, p. 98) This will lead to more decay and potentially lower the future value of his home.

Fails §11-500 -FAR calculation incorrect – SR, p.17.

The DRCA warns that 404A's design is dependent “on the basement square footage being excluded from the FAR calculation.” DRCA points out that the Applicant argues the basement does not count as FAR, and treats the ADU as “detached” even though “there are continuous interior spaces between the primary dwelling and the ADU.” (SR, p. 93). DRCA questioned whether the basement would comply as being “below the average grade calculation.” Yet, the CSR's ignore this observation, and simply accept at face value the Applicant's FAR calculation, choosing not to do their own. This needs independent analysis.

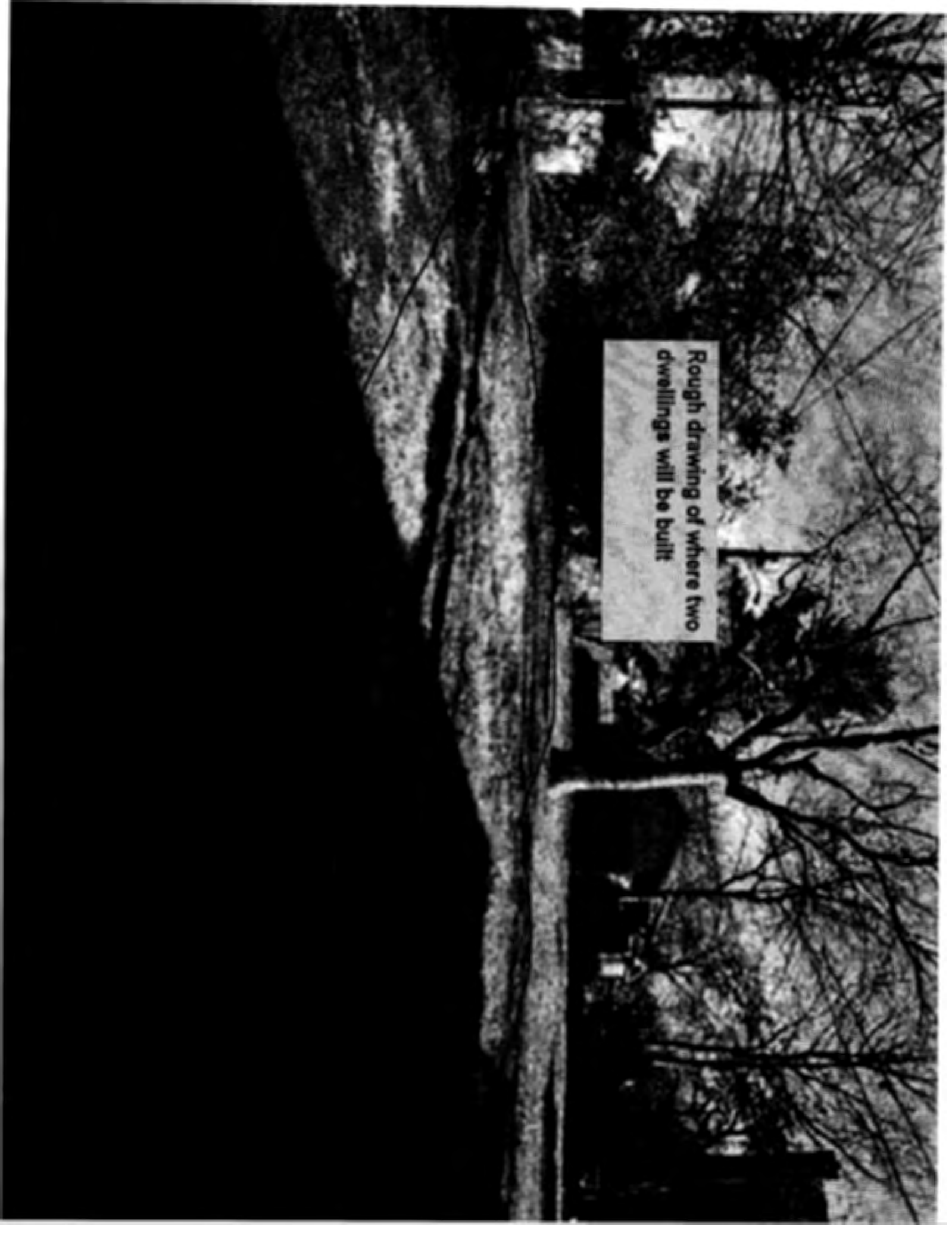
Breach of ADU rules

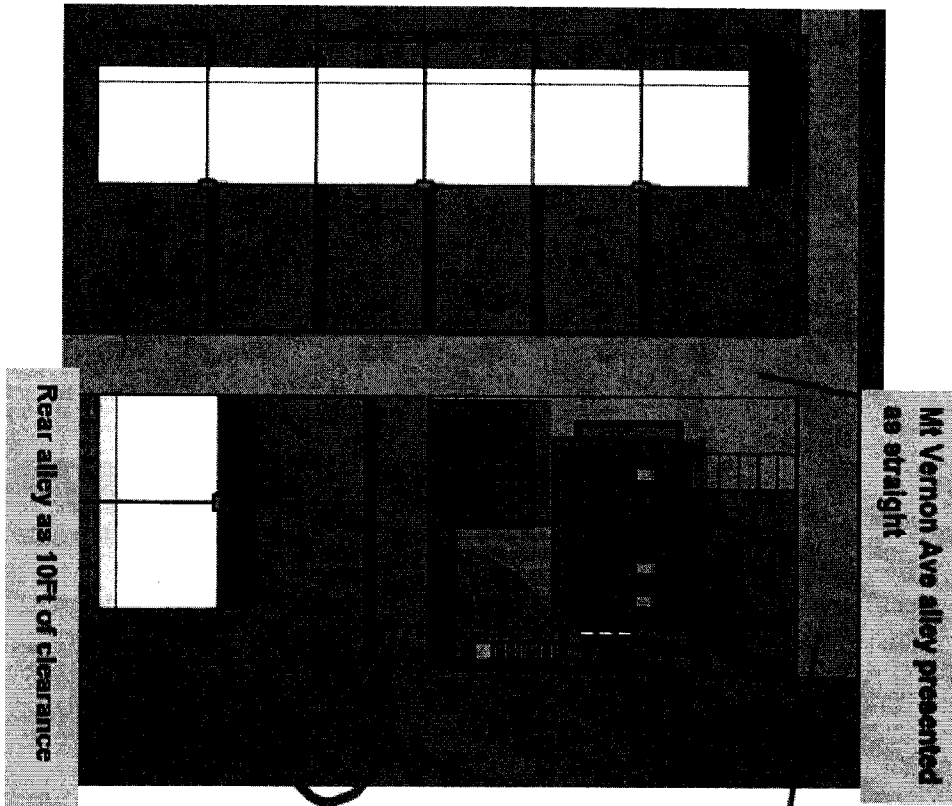
The Developers have admitted they will not be living in either the primary residence, nor the ADU, but will lease both out (one as an AirBnb). DRCA points out this is not allowed under zoning code section 7-203.B6 which requires that the owners of the property live in the primary residence at the time they apply for an ADU permit. (SR, p. 94) They note that this language was added by city council in 2021 to ensure that the majority of ADUs were not used as short-term rentals or “by a developer to build out the maximum envelope of a site pushing the sale price higher rather than providing additional affordable housing.” If this SUP is approved, the city council will set a new precedent of allowing developers to use ADUs as profit centers rather than avenues for affordable housing.

Sincerely,
Catharine Rice
424 East Alexandria Avenue

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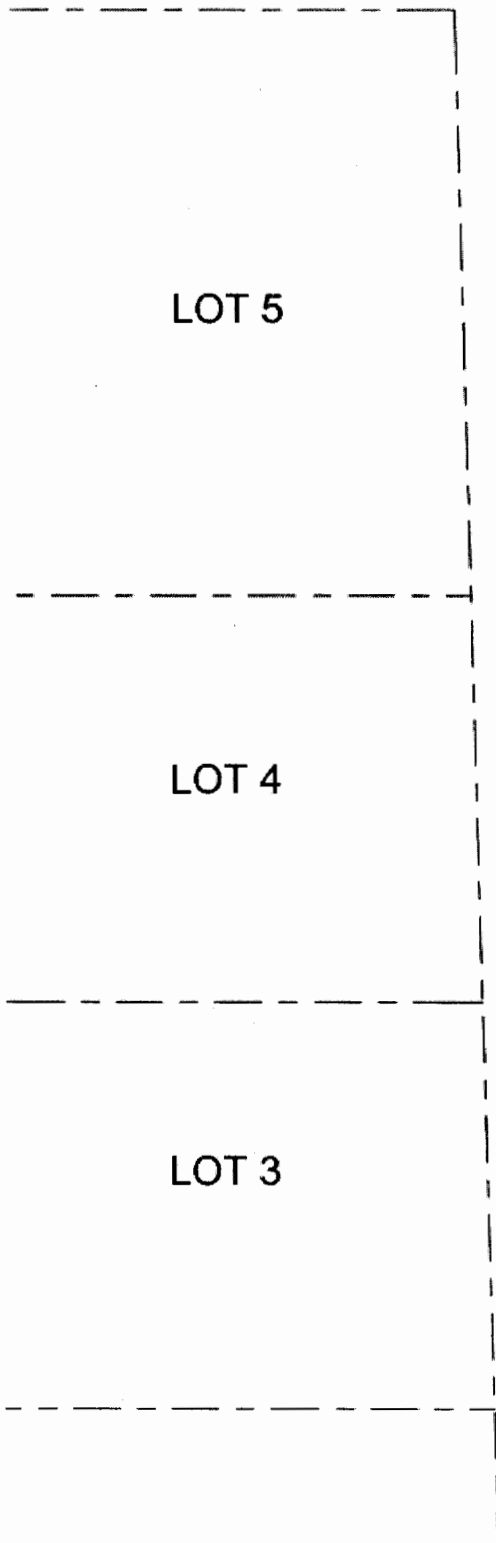
Rough drawing of where two dwellings will be built



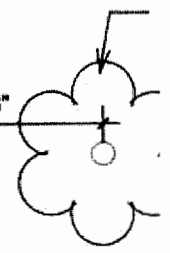
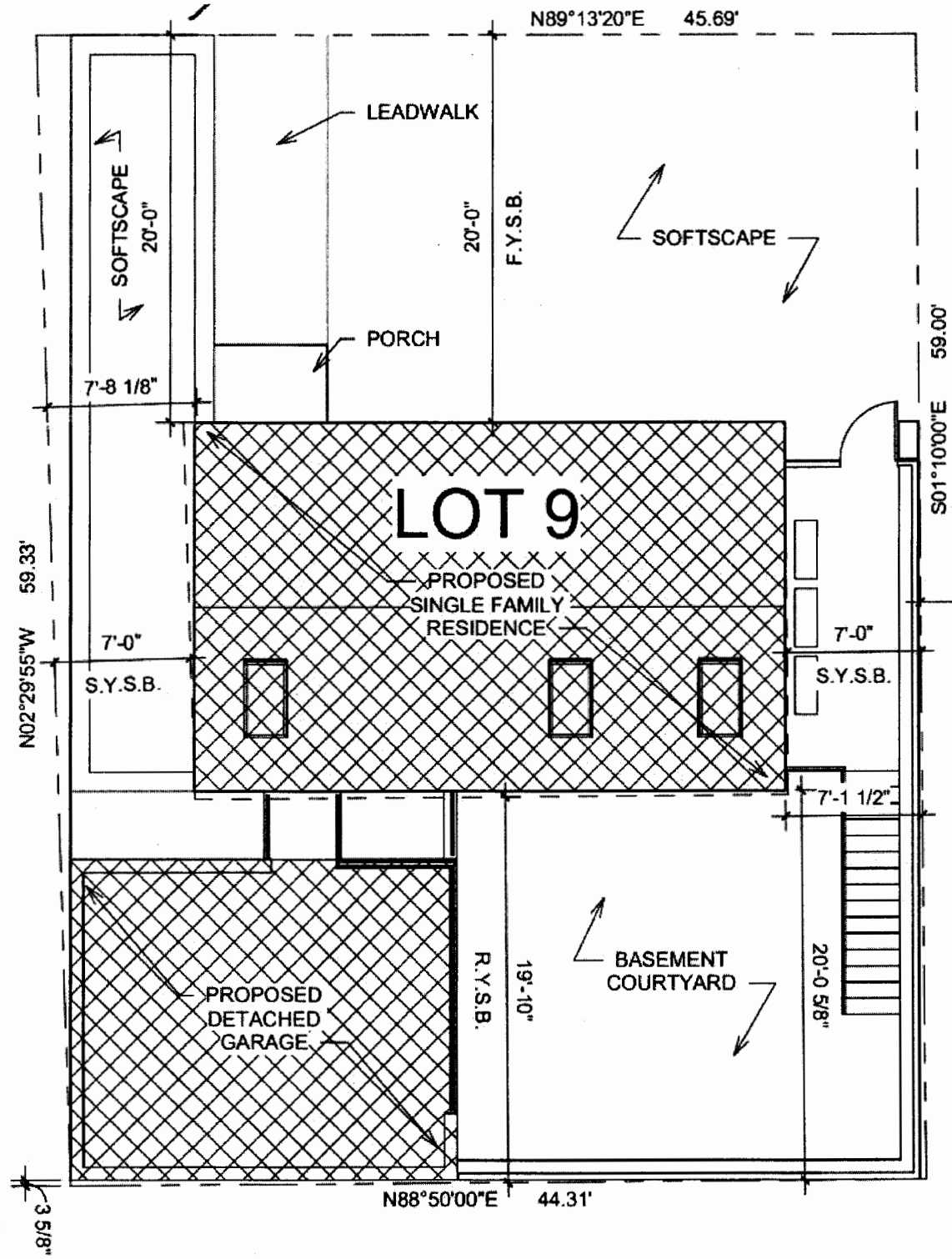


Rear alley as 10Ft of clearance

Mt Vernon Ave alley presented as straight



10' PUBLIC ALLEY



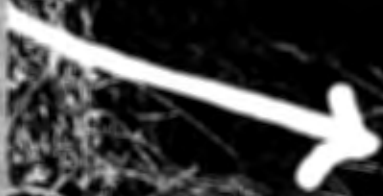
UNDEVELOPED

X

231 10' PUBLIC ALLEY

East Alexandria Alley

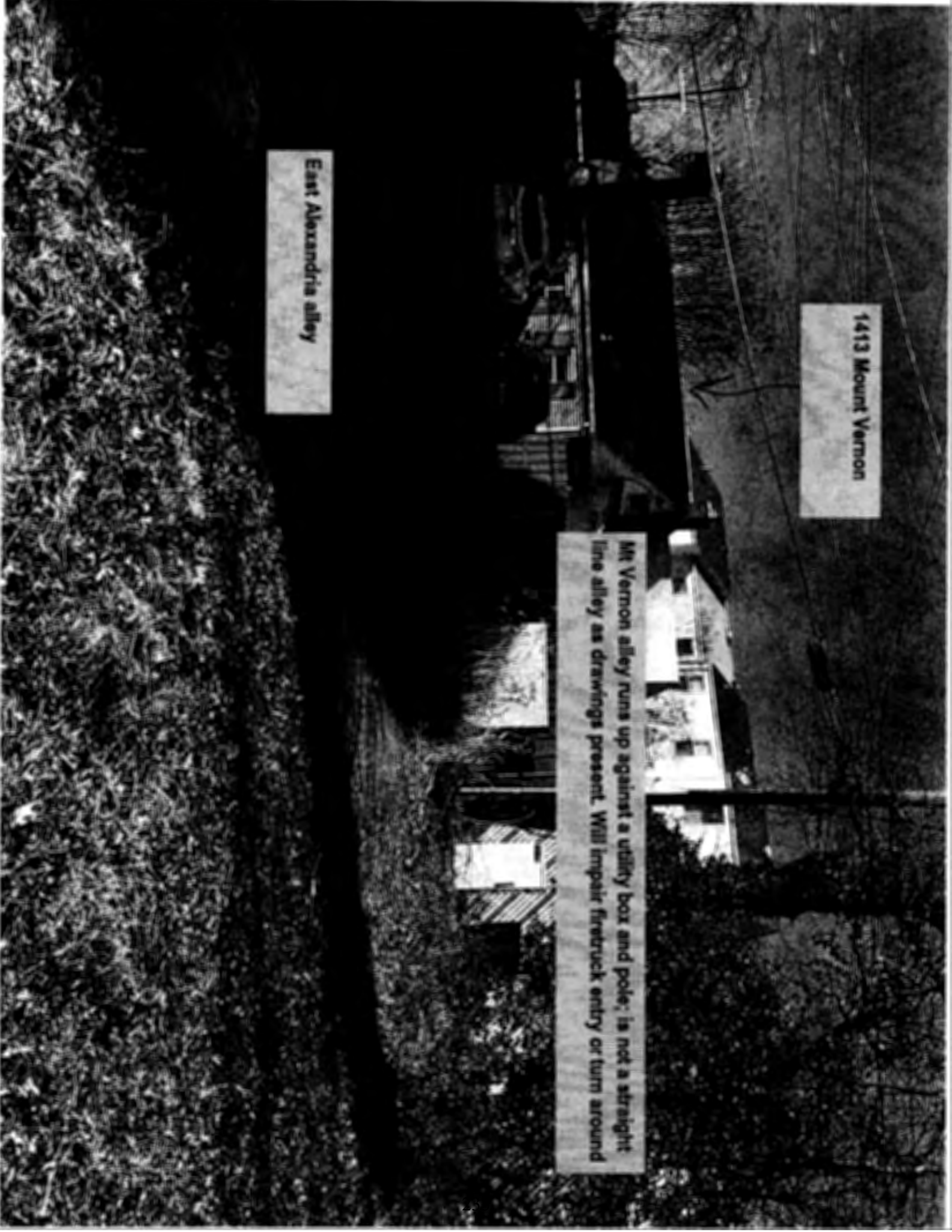
Mt Vernon Alley is not a straight through, it hits a utility box, pinches around to E. Alexandria Alley=impaired firetruck access

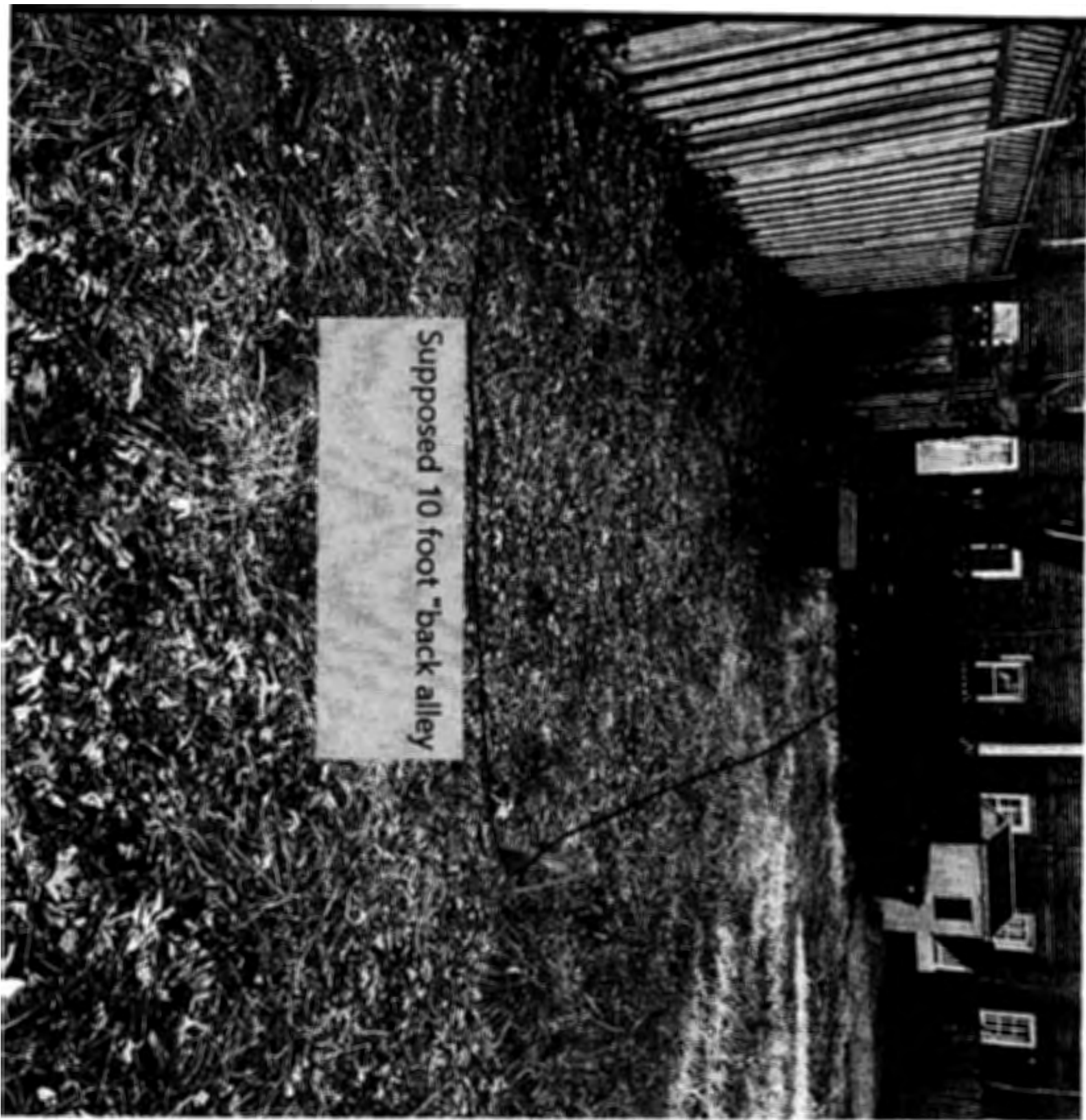


1413 Mount Vernon

Mt Vernon alley runs up against a utility box and pole; is not a straight line alley as drawings present. Will impair firetruck entry or turn around

East Alexandria alley





CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Angela Rice <riceangie@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 9:19 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Fwd: SUP 2023-00076
Attachments: 20240109_145125.jpg; 20240109_151608.jpg; 20240118_122123.jpg; IMG_20240118_123443.jpg

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Angela Rice <riceangie@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jan 18, 2024, 2:37 PM
Subject: SUP 2023-00076
To: Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>, John Chapman <john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov>, <Canek.Aguirre@alexandriava.gov>, <Amy.Jackson@alexandriava.gov>, <alyia.gaskins@alexandriava.gov>, <Kirk.McPike@alexandriava.gov>, <Sarah.Bagley@alexandriava.gov>

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the SUP for 404A East Alexandria. I believe that the project would have too many negative impacts on the Del Ray community and neighbors and should NOT be approved. This project does not merit the required exceptions to the many requirements it does not meet.

My husband, three kids and I live at 408 E. Alexandria Ave, directly across from the proposed project on the side where the proposed project has the two-story cantilever (which would be the ONLY two-story cantilever in Del Ray). I can attest to three immediate issues, neighbor disapproval, flooding and lack of parking. Not a single neighbor on this block is in favor of this project. This end of E. Alexandria Ave has documented flooding issues (see photos from Jan 9, 2024), this project will create more, simply connecting to the overmatched storm sewer is NOT sufficient. It already can't handle the amount of water it receives currently. There is year-round insufficient street parking in front of 404 E. Alexandria and on the adjacent Mt Vernon Ave block.

This is a Special Use Permit request due to the lack of street frontage and substandard lot size for the R-2-5 Zone and is not a build by right project. Special use permits are utilized to protect the integrity of the community and the rights and value of the neighboring property when considering a request to build on an otherwise unbuildable (per current code) lot. The house does not fit the character of the street, the surrounding block, or the Del Ray neighborhood. Additionally, as mentioned by the City Staff, there are no homes without street frontage in Del Ray.

As the Del Ray Land Use Committee and the Del Ray Citizens Association have written in their recommendation against approval, there are many red flags regarding the design, stormwater management, the FAR basement exclusion and setbacks, the impact of utility lines, the impact on neighboring trees, vision clearance at the alley entrances, use of the accessory dwelling unit as a short-term rental, and lack of emergency access. These issues were dismissed with unsatisfactory conclusions at the P&Z hearing. As a matter of policy, the Staff completely ignored and set aside.

For example, the Staff Report states there are many lots the same size in the general area. This is inaccurate and NOT how compatibility is determined. They are drawing a false equivalency to Townhomes, not detached homes, as in this project. Not to mention, one would think that a City Staff member would be honest and explain that townhomes are expressly NOT allowed in this zone and yet they use an illegal use to validate this project. I will reiterate, there are NO detached homes on lots this size without street frontage anywhere in the Del Ray neighborhood.

Commissioner Koenig said that the other neighbors who did not come to the hearing must approve of the SUP going forward. This is a false and unsubstantiated claim. This is concerning because the majority of the neighbors in the homes sent emails to the City Staff. It appears the City Staff did not notify the Planning and Zoning Staff of the neighbor's disapproval. This false claim needs to be noted. Commissioner Koenig also said, and I paraphrase, that although the Airbnb use is concerning, they couldn't deny it based on this because it wouldn't be any different than if any of the Commissioner's neighbors were to Airbnb their homes. But it IS very different. This lot does not have street frontage and is too small for the proposed single-family home and ADU. The adverse impact of confused renters and various delivery people looking for the two properties, should not be overlooked. This SUP is basically to approve a commercial use, A Hotel, on a small piece of land with no street frontage squeezed behind and adjacent to 10+ residential homes. The city code states that if an applicant needs a permit to build New Construction, the home MUST be his Primary residence to approve an ADU. (The owner of the property shall maintain the property as their primary residence at the time the permit is required by section 7-203 Accessory Dwellings.) The applicant affirmed to the neighbors AND at the Planning Commission hearing that he was NOT living in the home. Then he CAN NOT be approved for the ADU. We made the Planning Staff aware of this and they ignored it. The Planning Commissioners were made aware of this and ignored it. At a minimum, an SUP for an ADU on the site should not be approved.

Again, this project should be treated as commercial as it is intended to be used as a 2-unit Airbnb. This activity and intended use are not the purpose of a single-family zone. Neighbors are also very concerned that, although the intention for the applicant's use is as a 2-unit Airbnb, it could potentially be used as 4 separate units on this small lot. Approval would set an unintended precedent of Carte Blanche, allowing nearly any lot to be developed and with approval be used as 4 units.

City Staff advocating for a parking reduction because of the narrow alley size does not make sense. Only one vehicle can use the alley at a given time, regardless. Zoning Ordinance section 8-200(A)(1) requires two off-street parking spaces for a single-family dwelling. And the expressed intended use for this property is for two separate rental units. There is not sufficient street parking to make an exception for a property that will have two rental units. Reducing the parking requirement eases the burden on the project and creates more burden on the neighbors. But again, this lot won't accommodate a Detached house, a detached ADU and parking. THE SITE DOES NOT WORK

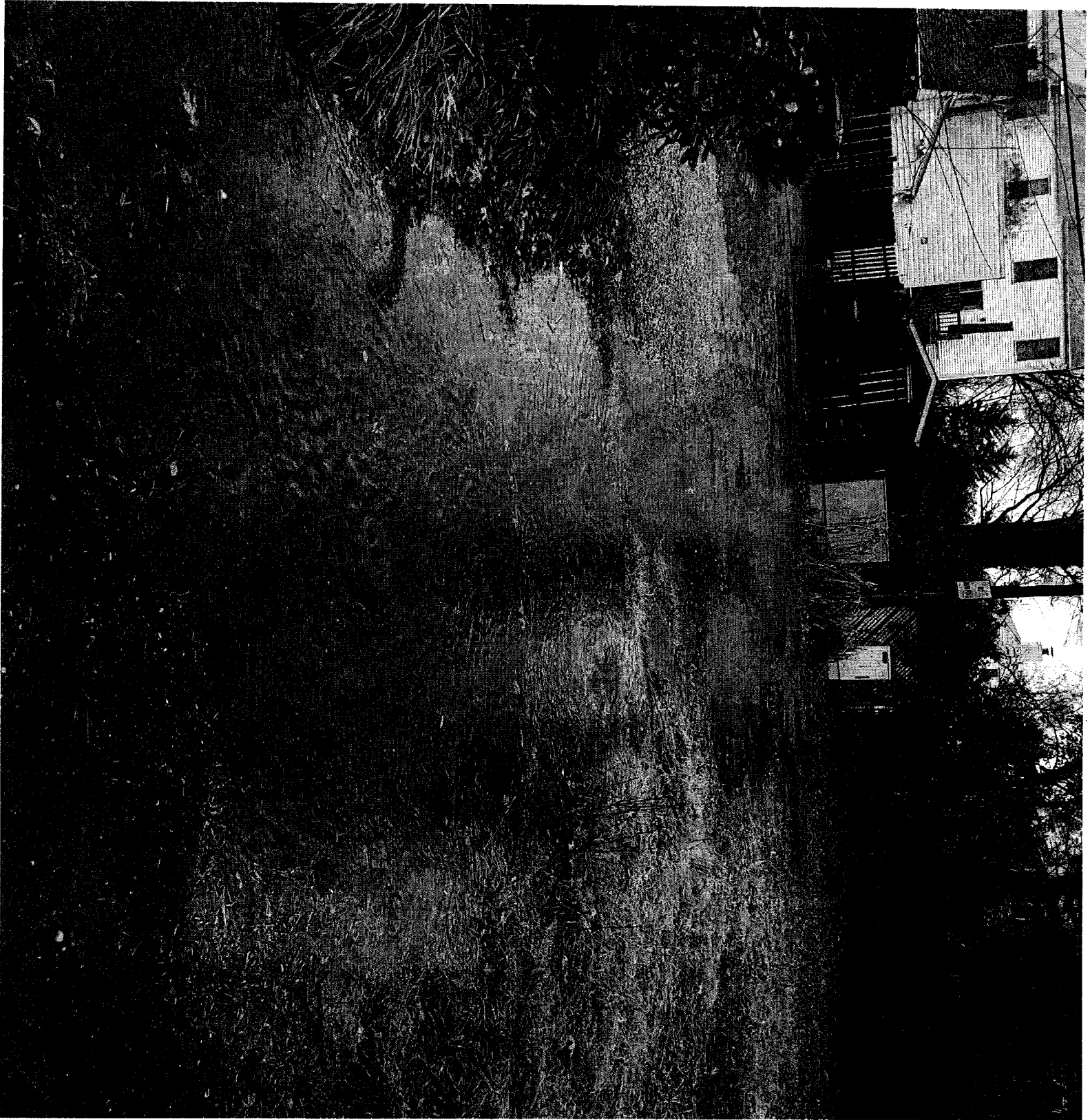
There are too many direct and potential future adverse impacts on the neighboring area to justify making so many exceptions for this project and approving a "un approvable" project like this.

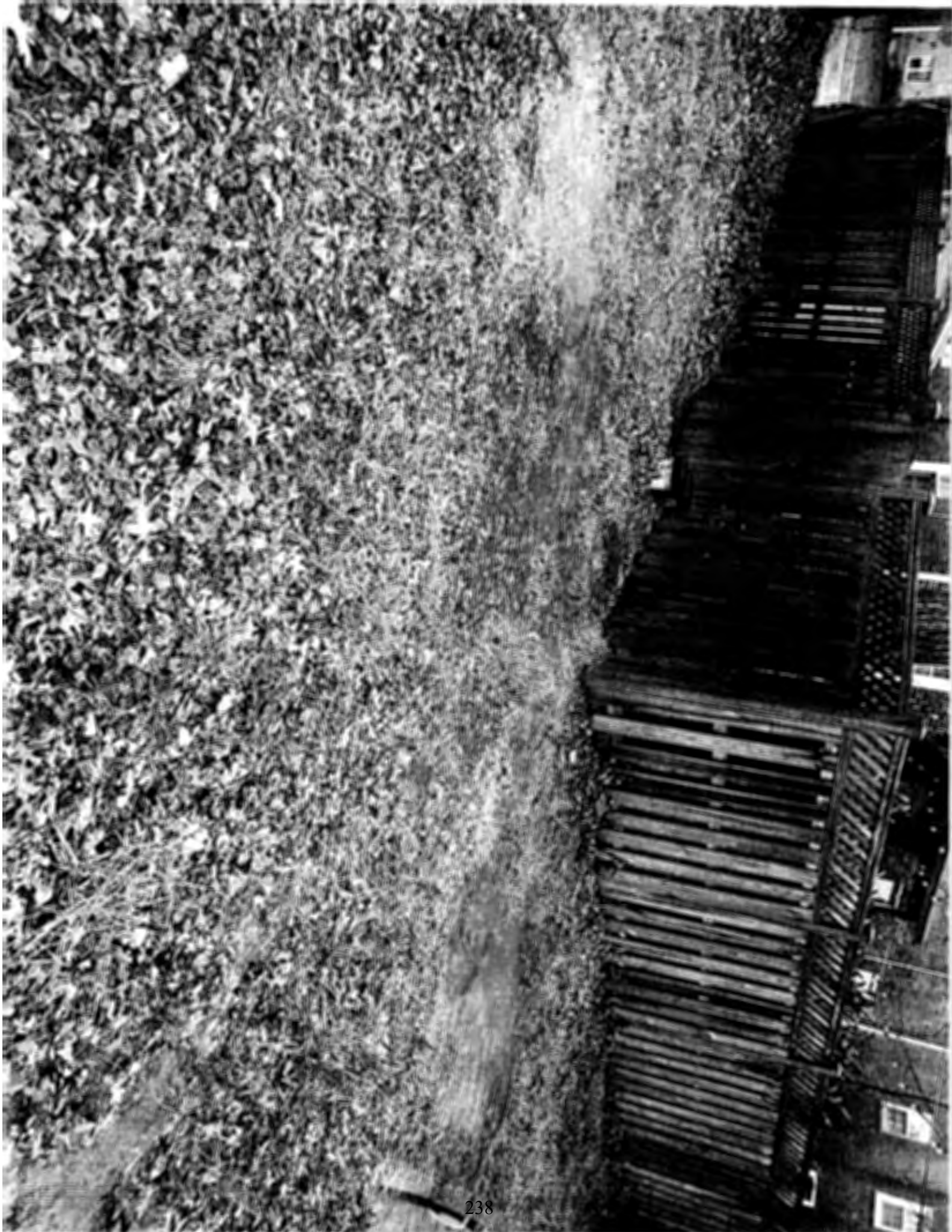
Just this afternoon, the blue car (photo attached) crashed right in front of the alley. This alley 100% does NOT meet the City's Vision Clearance requirement. There is not 70ft of vision clearance.

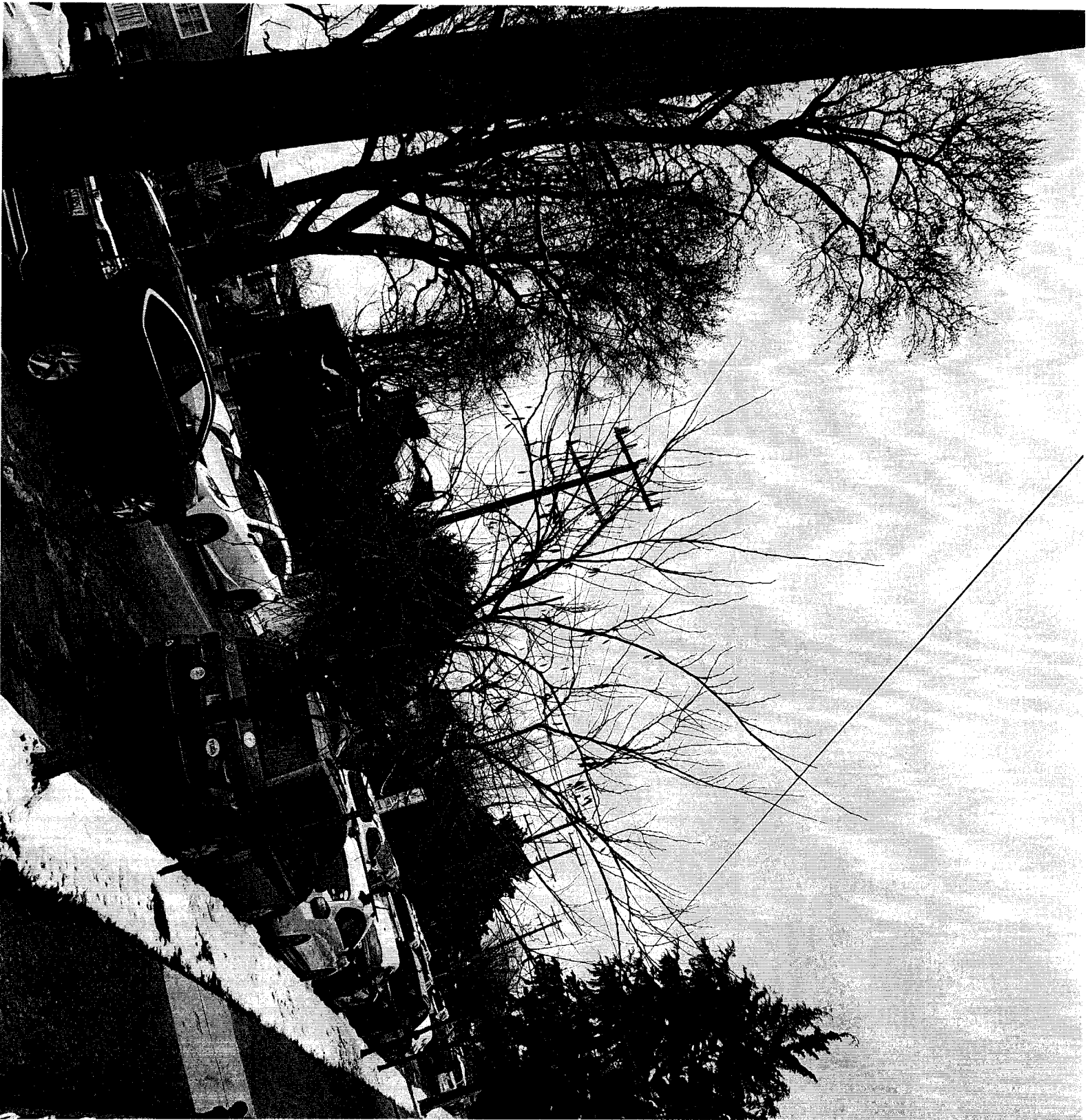
Thank you for your consideration,

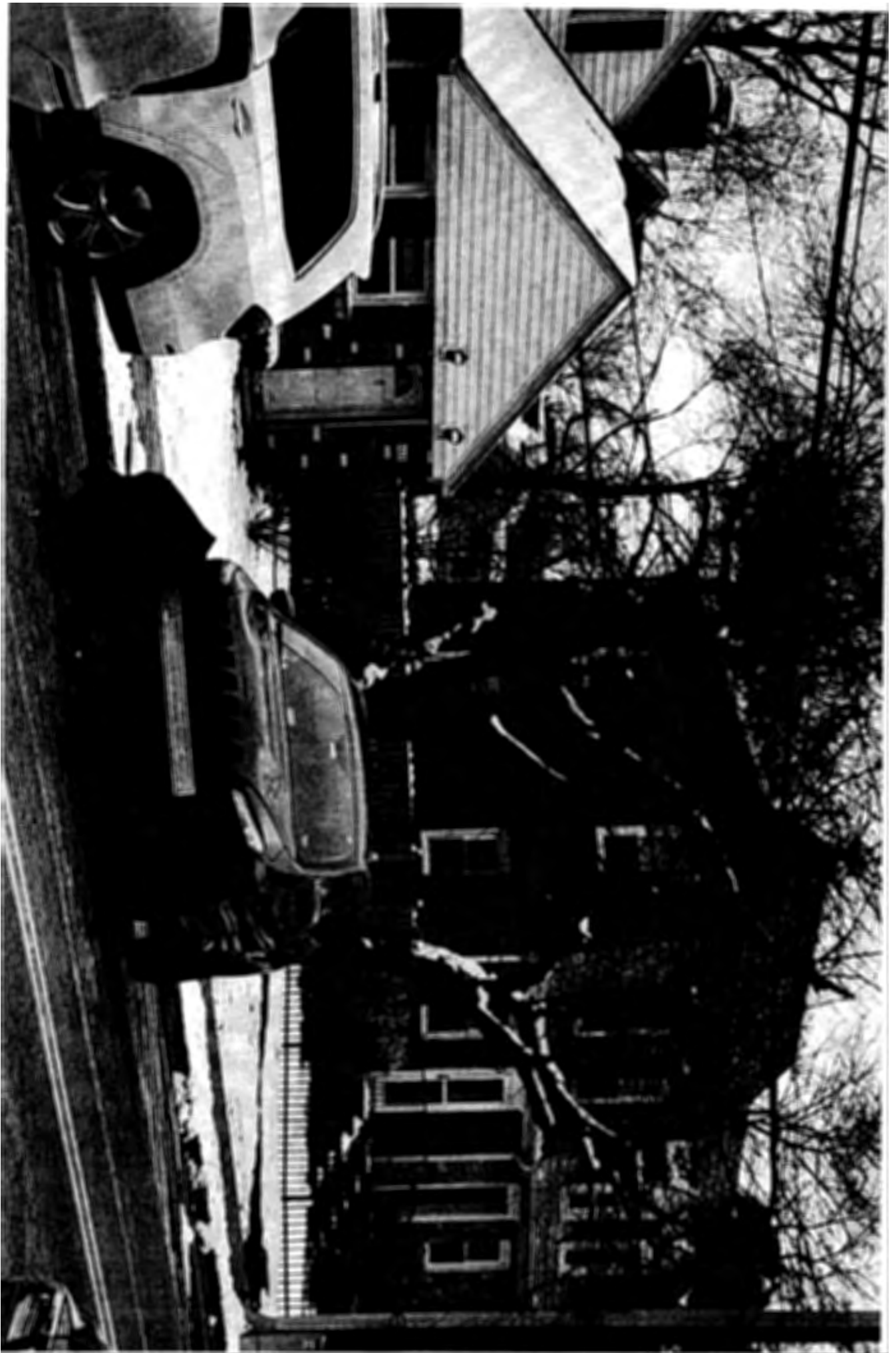
Angela Rice

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Alicia Montgomery
406 E. Alexandria Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22301
lishmo.202@gmail.com
(202) 689-9617

01/19/2024

To: Alexandria City Council Members
Alexandria, VA

Subject: **Request to Vote NO on Special Use Permit (SUP #2023-00076)**

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to you as a concerned homeowner, neighbor directly adjacent to the lot in question, and dedicated citizen of the Del Ray neighborhood in Alexandria. As an owner-occupant, I am deeply invested in the well-being and integrity of our neighborhood and am an active member in the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA). It is with this vested interest that I would like to address significant concerns regarding this proposal. I know that many of these concerns are echoed by other adjacent neighbors, as I hope you will see evidenced by our planned community involvement at the upcoming City Council Public Meeting on Saturday January 20th.

I would also like to apologize, in advance, for the very lengthy letter that I am submitting to you. The proposed development and subsequent rush, as it seems, to get this pushed through raises concerns that there is an underlying agenda to simply get new properties on the books to count towards the recent Zoning for Housing movement. This, unfortunately, has been coupled with what has felt like an effort to mute the local community from involvement in any back-and-forth discussions on the matter. For these reasons, I have taken the liberty of elaborating on my thoughts on several pressing issues that I feel merit careful consideration.

1. Lack of Communication with Surrounding Neighbors:

I am, at least, happy to say that this whole process has allowed me to meet many surrounding neighbors that I had not connected with before. It has been encouraging to see our local micro-community come together to discuss concerns, share information, and utilize the varied subset of knowledge and skills that each of us possess to help make sense of all of this. In stark contrast, I am very disheartened that our new prospective neighbor has taken no such initiative; while Mr. Teran claims that he organized a neighborhood meet & greet, I, as an owner directly adjacent to his lot, was not given the opportunity to be involved in any of this – I received no such

announcement or invite, nor has there been a simple knock on the door to open any lines of communication. This, along with Mr. Teran's inconsistencies thus far in public meetings about his intended use for the single-family home (from initially stating that he intended to reside at the property at the "meet and greet" to later saying that he intends to use this as a long-term rental), have left many of us very unsettled and untrusting.

Furthermore, as pointed out in my verbal testimony on January 4th, I am frustrated about the lack of communication between city zoning staff and the immediate neighbors. I was, admittedly, probably naïve to presume that the lack of communication was because no further action was being taken on this topic – that there was no need for further input on the matter unless the applicant were to propose a new plan to put forward for DRCA's approval prior to moving on to the city level. I was later aghast upon reading the planning and zoning staff's ultimate recommendations for approval ahead of the January 4th meeting, as this was a complete 180° from the DRCA's recommendation. I sincerely hope that the staff had simply just taken Mr. Teran at his word that he was having some form of open and active dialogue with the immediate community in reconstructing his plans. There certainly seemed to be a very open line of communication between Mr. Teran and staff, as evidenced in their report. In fact, Mr. Teran stated himself on record at the January 4th meeting, "staff, with us, they have been very receptive... the neighbors, the few that we have been able to talk to, were receptive." However, the turnout of 7 adjacent residents to voice opposition at the January 4th meeting, 5 letters submitted to city staff in opposition (not including the DRCA's opposition statement), and our neighborhood chat/email group of over 15 individuals (spanning over 9 properties immediately adjacent to the lot) does not support this claim. Unfortunately, the lack of community involvement has left the overwhelming impression that this SUP has been pushed through by an overzealous staff to get something on the books as an example of a Zoning for Housing (a "clever solution to providing housing in Alexandria" as quoted in the January 4th meeting).

Considering this, I feel that it is pertinent to note that the vote passed only by a narrow 4-3 majority. A large percentage of the 1 hour of discussions on this docket item was, in fact, spent on this concern. At least two of the commissioners who voted in favor of approval (Mr. Manor & Mrs. McMahon) stated that they, too, recognized that there was a glaring lack of communication and that they would support a motion to defer a vote to allow time for this. Ultimately, no motion was put forth for deferral as Mr. Macek argued that "it's not our job to say, well you should have talked to the neighbors more." Whose job is it, then – and where should we expect that step in this process?

2. Not Fitting the Character of the Neighborhood:

Clearly, "character" is very difficult to define – as it's a subjective judgment call and therefore open to interpretation. It seems, then, that the character of the neighborhood would be defined by a process of dialogue and feedback between developers/owners and the surrounding neighbors. This has been the precedent of expectation in other Alexandria neighborhoods for quite some time – Mr. Brown referenced in the January 4th meeting his past experiences as a part

of the Northridge Citizens Association on this matter, being that they would require applicants to have such dialogue with neighbors before a proposal would even be considered. As outlined above, sufficient dialogue did not happen in this case.

The staff report explicitly states that “this is the only alley lot in the Del Ray neighborhood” and “staff is not aware of any other lots without frontage in Del Ray”. Both are KEY factors in why this development does not fit in! While the applicants have attempted to take measures to hide or disguise their dwelling as 2 ADU’s associated with the street-facing homes to the south of the lot (404 & 406 E. Alexandria), the very fact that they recognize the need to do so shows that they recognize that this is out of character for single family dwellings in this location. Furthermore, zone ordinances do not allow for multiple ADUs on a single property, so the appearance of 2 “smaller appearing” dwellings also inherently does not fit.

Furthermore, I would like to reference additional selected commentary from the January 4th Planning Commission Meeting regarding this topic and my resulting thoughts:

- Carson (could not hear last name clearly), T&ES staff: “We are not breaking the mold with this project. In Old Town, there are alleys that are much narrower and there are other lane-way homes all throughout Alexandria, particularly right across the street, and all throughout the greater OT area where they take access from an alley. And so, it’s not a development that is atypical or not seen, in fact it’s quite popular not just here but all around the world because it’s a way to get incrementally smaller housing units on land that does not have street frontage.”
- Mr. Macek: “This isn’t that different than carriage houses and other things that are in the back of other lots that you see in the city. People are trying to say that you don’t build on lots in Del Ray – well Del Ray is part of the city, and we have lots that are along alleyways... we are not the planning commission for Del Ray, and we have to look at things on a citywide basis.”

To these, I would argue that the Zoning Ordinance Section 12-401(C) states: City council, upon consideration of the special use permit, finds that the proposed development will not unreasonably impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, will not diminish or impair the established property values in the surrounding areas, and will be compatible with the existing neighborhood character.

Neighborhood - *noun*

1. a district, especially one forming a community within a town or city.

By explicit definition, we are talking specifically about the neighborhood of Del Ray, not Old Town. It is, therefore, precisely the job of the Planning Commission/City Council to consider this in the eyes of the Del Ray community at large, and to reconsider the position as stated by the DRCA’s letter in opposition to this project.

3. Non-Compliance with ADU Requirements:

The proposed development does not meet the requirements for building an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) since the owner does not plan to have his primary residence as the home being built:

7-203 - Accessory dwellings.

(B) *Use limitations.*

(6) The owner of the property shall maintain the property as their primary residence at the time the permit required by section 7-203(A), above, is issued.

While residence for a new build site may be hard to define, Mr. Teran has stated, on record January 4th, that his intent is to rent the main property as a long-term rental, rather than occupy the residence himself. This, therefore, puts the ADU addition in non-compliance with established city regulations.

Somewhat on topic, concerns were voiced by many neighbors about this ADU being used specifically for short-term rentals (aka AirBNB), specifically in regards to individuals who are not familiar with the neighborhood being able to safely navigate the narrow alleyway if trying to access this by car – even if renters are told there is no parking for the ADU, I presume that many would attempt to use the public alleyway as a route to easily unload on arrival, not realizing that they will not be able to exit without backing out of the length of the alley and back on to a very busy main road (Mt. Vernon Avenue) with limited vision clearance. Although the Planning Commission commented that this was beyond the scope of their job to approve or deny the SUP proposal, there was considerable time taken for discussion about this topic. Notably, Ms. Lyle stated that although there are regulations in place (and tax revenue as a strong motivator for the city to enforce this), they have trouble even enforcing this in her HOA, and that this would foreseeably be more difficult to do so for a standalone single-family home.

4. Flooding Implications on Immediate Surrounding Neighbors:

Serious concerns have been raised about flooding impacts that this structure may bring upon immediate surrounding neighbors, me included. Protecting the well-being and property of our community members from environmental risks is paramount, and a thorough assessment of potential flooding risks is necessary. While I understand that this issue gets addressed officially in later stages of development planning, I urge you to consider this matter, at least as part of a holistic assessment of the implications of said plans, as you consider this early step of evaluating the SUP proposal.

Many of our homes were built in the 1930's with basements that match the footprint of our respective above-surface homes. Most of us to the west, north, and south of the lot face constant issues with flooding in our basements. My sump pump is always highly active during storms - and most recently with a substantial storm on January 9th we also had to utilize a Shop-Vac to evacuate excess water from our sump-pump basin every 3-4 hours through the night. Attached are a selection pictures of the SUP lot (404-A E. Alexandria) from the viewpoint of the 2nd story back windows of my home, January 9, 2024 (please refer to images submitted by email as they were too large to include in this file):

- Approx. 4:45pm: Images 1 - 3
- Approx. 6:45pm: Images 4 - 5

Referencing online Alexandria City watershed maps, the Hooffs Run underground watershed lies below the city in the Northridge, Del Ray, and Rosemont neighborhoods - with a complex array of underground streams being common to the area. Given this - and the provided documentation of significant standing ground-water on the SUP lot & adjacent properties from recent storms - there is a significant concern that the proposed plan's massive below-ground footprint, which runs nearly lot-line to lot-line of the entire lot (minus the changes made in attempt to reduce impact the local tree's critical root zone), will adversely affect the local watershed "bowl", despite stated measures to provide "appropriate" draining of the above-ground structures.

While I agree we should not stop an owner from utilizing their property by right, this is not a build-by-right lot. In terms of the flooding concerns raised, I do not feel that pushing this project through to the benefit of one owner, yet probable detriment of 9 surrounding homes (to the west, north, and south of the lot) is sound practice.

5. Minimum Requirements for Fire Access:

As clearly stated, the proposed development does not meet the minimum requirements for fire access, necessitating a code adjustment to green-light the build. Ensuring the safety of our community is of utmost importance, and any allowances outside of set standards should be carefully considered to avoid compromising residents' property and well-being. It seems to reason that the code guidelines are there for a reason and that adjusting this could limit access to the development and adjacent properties. While staff pointed out the code requirement for vehicular access to be 100ft from a dwelling's main entrance, there was an additional concern raised by Ms. Ramirez at the January 4th meeting that alleys generally must also be ~20ft for ample fire-truck access (code requirement referenced below). All the alleyways adjacent to this property are 10ft wide alleys, so this in conjunction with the property exceeding the 100ft minimum access requirement, lead me to have persistent concerns about fire safety and access to the lot.

- ARTICLE B (FIRE PREVENTION), CHAPTER 2 (FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION), TITLE 4 (PUBLIC SAFETY) OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA:

Appendix D 101.I: Requirements. The following requirements shall be followed when designing emergency vehicle access:

1. Access for emergency vehicles shall be provided to within 100 feet of the main or principal entrance to every building. The access shall be provided by a public or private street or parking lot.
- VIRGINIA STATEWIDE FIRE PREVENTION CODE (2012) SECTION 503.2.1:
Dimensions: Fire apparatus access roads shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet, exclusive of shoulders, except for approved

security gates in accordance with section 503.6, and an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches.

6. Impact to Adjacent Privately Owned Trees:

While I commend Mr. Teran's adjustments to his basement footprint in an attempt to preserve the critical root structure of the Silver Maple on public land, my understanding was that the arborist stated that there would be a moderate risk for impact to this tree. I share my neighbor's concerns as expressed in prior statements that if tree protection measures for this tree fail, there is a meager fine of \$2,500 or a requirement to place an immature 2" tree. Given the location of this tree, if the tree dies and falls, there will likely be minimal impact to adjacent property.

My additional concern is that the current requirement of notifying residents about potential damage to adjacent privately owned trees is insufficient for my comfort as a property owner. If my tree (#2, the Siberian Elm) or my neighbor's tree (#3, the Northern Catalpa) were to die because of construction, there could be considerable damage to my property. Given Mr. Teran's lack of engagement with many neighbors, I am left with little hope that any remediation would be made/offered to offset my losses.

Lastly, given the long-established err in paving the footprint of the alley from E. Alexandria Ave. that predated most, if not all neighbors along Mt. Vernon Ave. (1401-1411), the last 2 trees would certainly die as they are growing from within the 10-foot alleyway.

7. Miscellaneous Concerns:

Without adding further lengthy dialogue on further items, I would also like to officially state concerns with the following items which I'm sure other neighbors will address:

- Parking implications of adding additional housing density to this corner of the block:
Staff report states that there is still ample on-street parking on both Mt. Vernon and E. Alexandria Avenues. I would be intrigued to know their definition of "ample" as, on any given day, there is no abundance of parking on these streets or adjacent blocks. Pictures of these streets have previously been submitted by Angela Rice.
- Construction Logistics: The 10ft alleyway will be a significant limiting factor in the logistics of how heavy construction vehicles will access the property. Furthermore, there was no forethought in planning for where construction materials and vehicles will be stored for the duration of the project, as they legally cannot be parked/stored on public roads/access & the very nature of the lot-line to lot-line build does not leave room for onsite storage.
- Increased usage of the alley off of Mt. Vernon Ave. As this lot does not have street frontage, this will inherently increase traffic (foot traffic or unexpected vehicular traffic) as needed to access the property for deliveries (mail, Amazon/FedEx/UPS, food deliveries, etc.) and this can lead to a heightened risk for pedestrian accidents along the narrow alleyway.

In conclusion, because the Del Ray Citizens Association overwhelmingly voted to not approve the SUP whereas the Alexandria Planning Commission narrowly approved the SUP with a split vote, this underscores the divisive nature of the proposed development within our community. Such a significant level of opposition warrants careful consideration. I urge you to carefully consider these concerns and vote **against** the approval of SUP #2023-00076.

I greatly appreciate your attention to this matter and your dedication to serving the best interests of Alexandria & of our Del Ray neighborhood. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alicia Montgomery
Homeowner, Neighbor, and Citizen of Alexandria

IMAGE 1



IMAGE 2



IMAGE 3



IMAGE 4



IMAGE 5



To: City Council
Subj: Please vote No on SUP 2023-0073: 404A East Alexandria
March 11, 2024

Please vote No on SUP 2023-0073, which will not be compatible with the existing neighborhood character, and which will diminish or impair established property values of surrounding homes, and have an adverse impact on the character of neighborhood, traffic conditions, utility facilities, public health safety and general neighborhood welfare. Please know that to approve this Application is also to establish a new SUP precedent for developers to use for R2-5 housing construction in Del Ray that is at odds with our basic zoning guidelines, our commitment to the historic preservation of the character of Del Ray, the recent ADU rules, and the intent of our new Housing for All zoning rules to bring in new housing, but not by crowding up R-2-5 lots with multiple buildings.

1. It fails §12-401 (C)—These dwellings will not be compatible with the existing neighborhood character

More than twelve (12) surrounding neighbors and Del Ray Citizens Association & its Land Use Committee have asked for rejection of this application, which wants to wedge two new dwellings into a substandard lot at 404A East Alexandria. 404A fails the lot area and width requirements and so **is a substandard lot**. This substandard lot not only fails the Section 12.402 block face analysis, and so should never have been considered for an SUP, but **will not face, nor have any frontage on an actual street, in stark contradiction with the historical development of Del Ray. No such homes exist in Del Ray** and so this application is not compatible with the existing neighborhood character. The City's Staff Reviewers (CSRs) admit this, saying "this is the only alley lot in the Del Ray neighborhood," but they then overlooked this fact by rationalizing that the dwellings will be a smaller size and less visible from the road (Staff Report (SR), p.17, found [here](#)) That fails the test. 404A will also be a Contemporary style. There are no Contemporary designed homes in the neighborhood. The CSRs admit this (SR, p.14) but ignore it with the weak rationale that the home will be rectangular and have a gable roof (SR p.14). They also fail to note that the low-pitched roof is also out of character with the neighborhood.

2. It fails §12-401 (C)—There are numerous indicators that these dwellings will diminish or impair established property values of surrounding homes, and will have an adverse impact on the character of the neighborhood, traffic conditions, utility facilities, public health, safety and general welfare (per §11-504 (B)(10)).

The CSRs simply state, with no proof or evidentiary support, that 4040A will not diminish or impair the established property value of surrounding homes. They simply state that the dwellings will increase the value of the land on which they are built, and by extension, this will increase similar size properties of the neighbors.

The CSRs should have rejected this SUP based on neighbors' and DRCA observations of the numerous ways in which the value of the surrounding homes will face a reduction in value, or impaired future value, including, 1) the tight physical crowding into their backyards by two dwellings and whose Contemporary aesthetic contradict surrounding homes 2) the reduced greenery and killing of 5 trees in their backyards and bordering the lot, 3) the impairment of their existing parking spaces, 4) the increased fire risks and significant flooding into their

properties, 5) the increased alley traffic and associated danger to pedestrian and vehicular traffic due to existing narrow, cluttered alley clearance (Applicant will be leasing both primary home and ADU as an AirBnb), and, 6) the movement of a massive amount of utility wires.

Surrounding home values will decline in appeal and value due to 404A creating a crowded-in, disconsonant backyard visual, inconsistent with the rest of the neighborhood, which is currently characterized by homes facing the street, with greenery in the backyard. (Potential R25 lot home buyers will turn away from homes that are jammed up against two dwellings, versus those with open backyard greenery). Neighboring homes values will decline due to the death of trees currently in their backyards, due to Applicants' two dwellings and basements crossing into the tree drip lines and critical root systems. Fewer trees undermine current flood mitigation and current greenery value. The Mt Vernon alley is narrow and not straight (despite applicants' drawings, see photos below); and pinches tightly around a large utility box and pole and curves to the East Alexandria alley. Due to the proximity of 404A resting tight against the East Alexandria alley, the townhouses on Mt Vernon street will have impaired access to their back parking spaces, removing value from their homes. The future value of the townhouses could be forced into stasis, due to their proximity to dwellings that will face increased fire risk. 1413 East Alexandria notes that 404A fails to meet the 100-foot emergency access requirement, (SR, p. 98) DRCA points out the narrow alleys are not even accessible by current garbage trucks, let alone fire trucks. (SR, p. 93) (Even the Applicants have asked for a reduction in the parking requirement from 2 to 1 car due to the difficulty of turning a car around in this site.) The CSRs note the applicant will need a waiver to fire codes during construction. (SR, p. 17). The lack of alley clearance but increased traffic from the leasing of the two Applicant dwellings, will lead to increased vehicle and pedestrian traffic accidents, and reduced pedestrian and child safety reducing the value of surrounding homes. (For this, Staff suggested on March 5 that the city relinquish two parking spaces at each alley end to accommodate the Applicant's negative impact on alley public safety). The value of 1413 Mt Vernon will undoubtedly suffer—the owner noted that both the construction trucks and the short- and long-term dwelling lessees will end up using his driveway to turn around in due to the pinched off alley space. (SR, p. 98). Numerous neighbors and the DRCA note the heightened flooding in this area which will be exacerbated by the Applicants two dwellings and basements, reducing surrounding home values. 1413 Mt Vernon wrote that his home sits at the lowest point in the area, and 404A's increased impervious surface in this high flood zone, will send the flood waters toward his home. (SR, p. 98) This will lead to more decay and lowering the future value of his home, and to those of his neighbors. Numerous utility lines will need to be removed and repositioned to accommodate the dwellings, not shown in the Applicant's sterilized drawings. Surrounding homes will be impacted by inhibited electricity, noise and physical pollution such a massive undertaking will require, all so 404A can be located on this substandard lot.

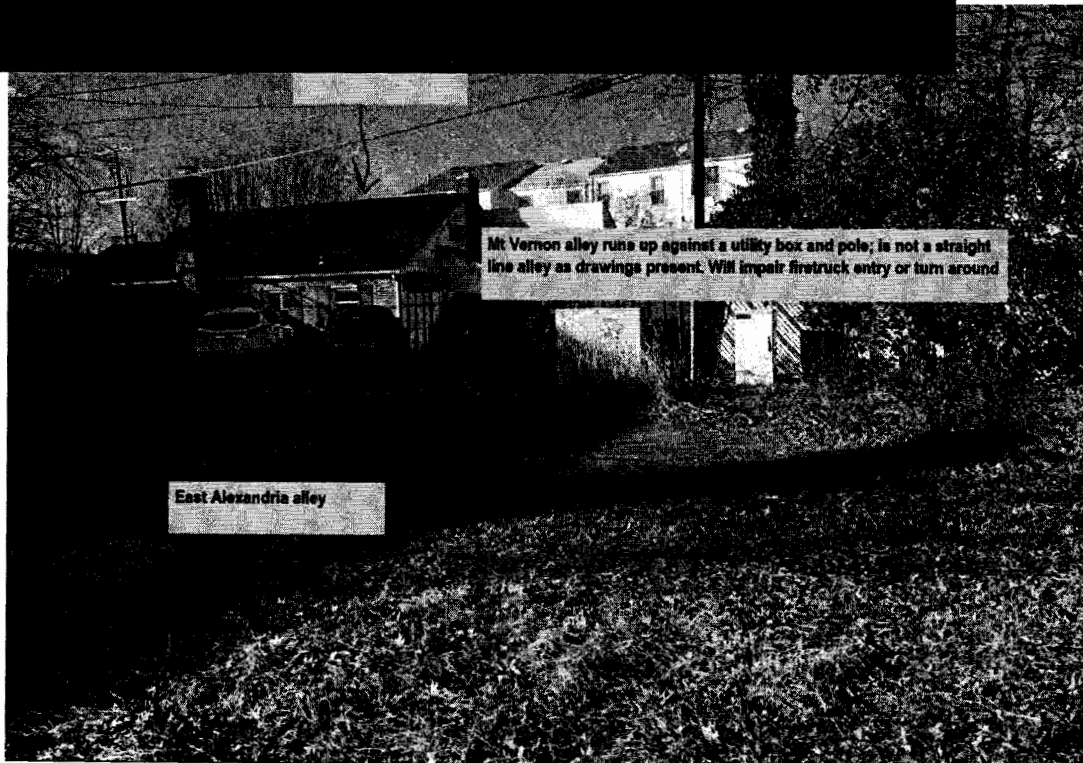
Fails §11-500 -FAR calculation incorrect – SR, p.17.

The DRCA warns that 404A's design is dependent "on the basement square footage being excluded from the FAR calculation." DRCA points out that the Applicant argues the basement does not count as FAR, and treats the ADU as "detached" even though "there are continuous interior spaces between the primary dwelling and the ADU." (SR, p. 93). DRCA questioned whether the basement would comply as being "below the average grade calculation." Yet, the CSR's ignore this observation, and simply accept at face value the Applicant's FAR calculation, choosing not to do their own. This needs independent analysis.

Breach of ADU rules

The Developers have admitted they will not be living in either the primary residence, nor the ADU, but will lease both out (one as an AirBnb). DRCA points out this is not allowed under zoning code section 7-203.B6 which requires that the owners of the property live in the primary residence at the time they apply for an ADU permit. (SR, p. 94) They note that this language was added by city council in 2021 to ensure that the majority of ADUs were not used as short-term rentals or “by a developer to build out the maximum envelope of a site pushing the sale price higher rather than providing additional affordable housing.” If this SUP is approved, the city council will set a new precedent of allowing developers to use ADUs as profit centers rather than avenues for affordable housing.

Sincerely,
C Rice, 424 East Alexandria Avenue

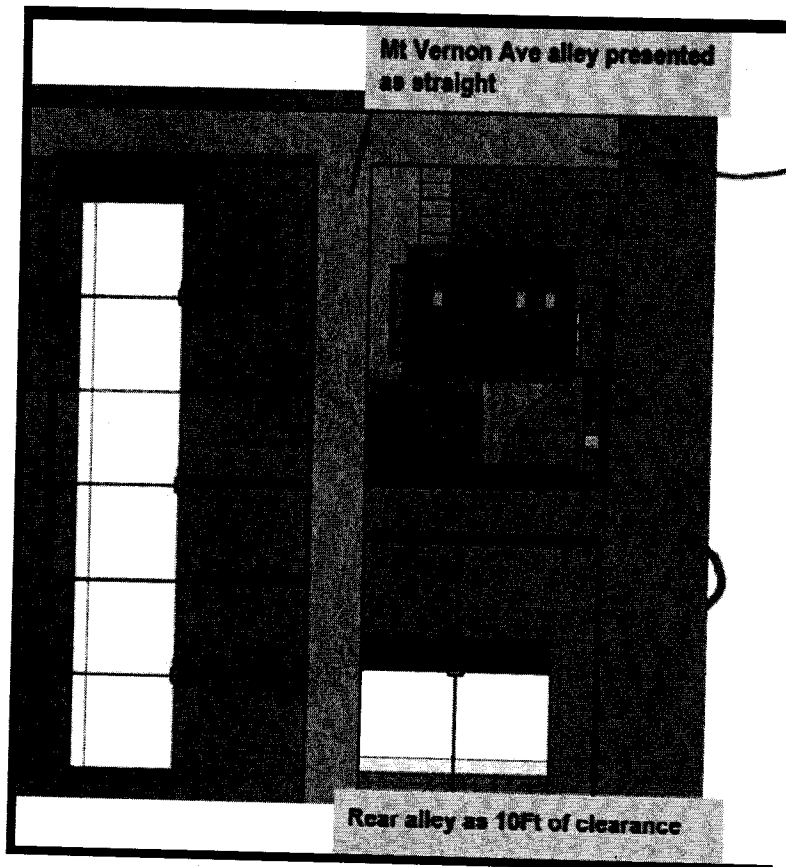




(NEXT PAGE)



Falsely portrayed by Applicant



Dear Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the residents of the City of Alexandria, thank you for your leadership of this City. I urge you to reject Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 at the City Council legislative meeting on March 12, 2024, and hope that to finally have the opportunity to provide a testimony.

I wanted to thank those Members who responded to me and my neighbors' emails to learn our perspectives about the deleterious impact on our homes if this SUP were approved. We only wished to have similar empathy from the Staff at the Department of Planning and Zoning. My neighbors span the spectrum of perspectives on Del Ray's growth but after self-learning about the SUP process and City Regulations, we are in agreement that the City Staff has not been objective and borderline deceptive. In addition to their multiple mistakes leading this City Council discussion, the Staff have not been sincere in their efforts to engage us and instead have been manipulative and held their ground on their original position without a willingness to compromise. To say that this frustration has led to distrust would be an understatement.

Their first missed opportunity to foster a discussion followed Del Ray Citizen Association's public vote to oppose the SUP on November 7, 2023. The second missed opportunity was after the split 4-3 vote by the Planning Commission on January 4, 2024. It wasn't until Mayor Justin Wilson urged a discussion between the City Staff, neighbors, and Applicant after the February 4, 2024, administrative decision. The City Staff finally reached out via an unannounced door-to-door campaign on a three-day holiday weekend (February 17) that was less than a week from the postponed discussion on February 24 (that was subsequently delayed by their error). This could only be interpreted as a way to divide our voices and check the box in hopes that none of us are available as there was no email or written announcement of their visit. Another meeting on March 4 included several of my neighbors, but unfortunately, we were out-of-town on travel on that day.

I've re-pasted my other two letters below my signature for your reference and wanted to summarize my rationale in asking you to reject the SUP.

- The increased flooding risk will make many of our homes inhabitable given the infeasibility of further updating our 1939-built townhomes that are immediately west of 404A Alexandria. Through sump pumps, our houses are below elevation to 404A and already run routinely to mitigate excess water brought into our basements on dry days. Given that 404A is almost-always saturated on a minor rain event and underground streams drain the Hooff's Run Watershed, it is highly likely that a predominantly underground footprint of both an adjoined primary unit and ADU that runs against the lot borderline will increase the flooding pressure on our homes. The older trees that will be killed due to the planned development of this SUP will further increase the flooding potential as they currently are another reservoir for the underground water.
- The increased traffic on Mount Vernon from a poorly-visible alleyway will endanger the pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles, particularly the children walking to/from GW Middle School and commuters heading to/from Braddock Metro. The alley is not visible going Southbound on Mt Vernon Avenue because of a tall fence and parked cars that make it hard to see. It is also unexpected by cross-traffic as it is a) the only middle-of-the-block alley way on Mt Vernon Avenue, b) barely 10 feet in width and without cross-walks or other signage,

and c) less than 200 feet from a major intersection where cars / bicyclists / pedestrians are more likely to focus their attention, rather than on this alleyway. Given the lack of street frontage, no one would expect cars or service vehicles to be crossing the sidewalk or into Mt Vernon Avenue.

- The lot is defined as substandard for multiple reasons and given that it is on-record that the intended use of the property is as rental properties, the SUP does not describe a project that would be in-character with the immediate neighborhood or, as the City Staff likes to allude, does not represent the vision of Zoning For Housing.
- Alexandria Times has investigated and shared many of the concerns about this property
 - <https://alextimes.com/2024/02/city-makes-second-mistake-in-public-engagement-process-for-404a-east-alexandria-ave/>
 - <https://www.alxnow.com/2024/03/07/del-ray-accessory-dwelling-unit-proposal-raises-concerns-about-short-term-rentals/>
 - <https://alextimes.com/2024/01/what-to-watch-at-saturdays-council-public-hearing/>

Again, thank you for reviewing and considering this recommendation to vote in opposition of this SUP application. I hope for an opportunity to share my testimony as part of the verbal arguments and in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me by email if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Mark Lim (and Yashin Lin)

1407 Mount Vernon
markdim@gmail.com

Previous written testimony sent to City Council Members for February 24, 2024 hearing

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your leadership representing the interests of our community. As the final check-and-balance to a process that seems to be steam-rolled by City Staff and the Applicant, I ask you to reject the Special Use Permit application #2023-00076 at the City Council hearing on February 24, 2024, as Docket # 24-1854. Below my signature is my written testimony for the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024. Rather than repeat that letter, I wanted to further share why I recommend that you consider rejecting this application.

My residence will be directly impacted if this substandard lot is developed as designed in the application. The lack of community engagement and disregard for community opinion by the Applicant and Department of Planning and Zoning Staff remains appalling. Those affected by this application remain united in opposition, as shown by: Mayor Wilson's comments at the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024 (quoted below); an Alexandria Times article calling this a "contentious issue" on January 17, 2024; a split 4-3 vote by the Planning Commission on January 4, 2023; and formal opposition by the Del Ray Citizen's Association sent to the Department of Planning and Zoning on November 20, 2023. Amongst this public opposition and contention, the Applicant and Staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning have not offered a forum for discussion or resolution.

None of the letters supporting this application were authored by affected neighbors, except for one who welcomed "new neighbors in our immediate area and the diversity in housing". As the applicant responded to Planning Commissioner Koenig's question on January 4, 2024 (4 hrs : 9 mins) "Ideally our plan would be to rent it long term, year lease" without mention in the application or subsequent reports that this development would be rented at below-market rates. This property is not an example of Zoning For Housing, a vision of which I'm supportive as the City continues to grow. But, that vision is disingenuously applied in this letter of support and by the Staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning who justified their recommendation against the opposition of Del Ray Citizen's Association at the Planning Commission Public Hearing. Zoning for Housing should include sincere engagement of the community and the steam-rolling to advance this specific application is an example of what not to do.

As Mayor Wilson said at the City Council's Public Hearing (2 hrs : 56 mins), "There has been considerable disagreement between the applicant and residents...let me encourage the applicant and the neighbors to get together...and have some conversation about the areas of disagreement and see what possible could be agreed to." My neighbors who would be negatively impacted if this permit is approved represent different interests in this City's growth. However, this lack of engagement by the Department of Planning and Zoning staff and Applicant has brought us together to learn and share what is happening at 404-A E. Alexandria Avenue. It was through these forums that I learned: a) about the application and potential impact to my residence (only one paper sign was posted in a non-obvious location on E. Alexandria Avenue, a sign that has been missing for weeks), b) that some neighbors reached out to the Department of Planning and Zoning and not received a response, and c) that not all impacted neighbors received an invitation to the one-and-only introduction by the Applicant in November 2023. This meant that we had to quickly learn about the utility of a Special Use Permit and the review process, search historical public records of our residence and community, and provide testimonies to Del Ray Citizen's Association, Planning Commission, and City Council. Beyond those forums and particularly given the public perception of this issue, the applicant and/or staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning had multiple opportunities and ample time to do outreach but failed to do so. Instead, we learn about updates on the Staff Report through formal reports submitted to dockets of the City Council Public Hearings.

The Applicant and the City Staff have not reached out to me, even though my email address is publicly available as written testimony. Another missed opportunity was at the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024, where about 20 of us planned to provide verbal testimony or support. Upon learning about the delay, we all met in the overflow room to discuss next steps. The Applicant entered the room, saw all of us and instead of joining the discussion, left the room to consult with Mr. Sam Shelby of the Department of Planning and Zoning who waited in the hallway. The door to the overflow room is glass and we were at the entrance, so they could not have missed us as I clearly saw them in discussion. But, both left without saying a word, missing an opportunity for transparent discussion and furthering concerns that City Staff sides with the Applicant and are not interested in talking with us.

Instead, Planning Director Mr. Karl E. Moritz reached out to two neighbors by email on Friday, February 16, 2024, at 5:19 p.m. EST, asking to meet. This outreach, one week prior to the City Council Public Hearing, three weeks after Mayor Wilson's recommendation, and after 5pm on the Friday before a three-day weekend, can be seen as nothing but devious. I did not receive this invitation. Fortunately, we developed an email list among affected neighbors after the City Council meeting, with many of us changing our Saturday plans to meet with Mr. Moritz and Mr. Shelby with less than 24 hours notice. When I asked Mr. Moritz why I wasn't invited to the discussion, he said that he didn't have my email address (I had to remind him about the written testimony) and that he was planning on going door-to-door. Their unannounced door-to-door campaign on the Saturday of a three-day weekend would have occurred *after* meeting my neighbors. None of this makes practical sense and furthers speculation that this was a last-minute and insincere attempt to "check the box" on engaging the community a week before the postponed Public Hearing.

As mentioned in my original testimony, I remain concerned about the increased underground flooding to my basement and the increased risk to pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic on Mount Vernon Avenue. At the impromptu Saturday meeting, Mr. Moritz and Mr. Shelby did not provide comment on the flooding potential and seemed to agree with the poor visibility of cross pedestrian and vehicular traffic after we walked down the alley, acknowledging that this may be the only alley on Mt Vernon Avenue that is in-the-middle of a block. Given their lack of engagement, I was still disappointed that neither were prepared to answer those concerns, even though it was raised in several written testimonies submitted by myself and others.

Again, thank you for your leadership and opportunity to provide my comments in advance of the discussion on February 24, 2024. Please do not hesitate to email me at markdlim@gmail.com if you have any questions about the content of this testimony, the one submitted for the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024 (pasted below), or would like to discuss my frustration on the lack of engagement by the Applicant and staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (and Yashin Lin)
1407 Mount Vernon Avenue

Previous written testimony sent to City Council Members for January 20, 2024 hearing

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your continued service representing the best interests of our community. Change is not easy, particularly for a city with extensive historical roots, and as you steer our City through Northern Virginia's growth, I remain proud of your leadership in ensuring that Alexandria maintains a healthy and inclusive community.

The health of our community has embodied a personal obligation to contribute through community service. To date, I have volunteered over 400 hours to the Alexandria Health Department's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team. This includes weekends supporting and supervising: annual mass influenza vaccination events, several COVID-19 mass testing events, large COVID-19 vaccine clinics that immunized over a thousand community members to smaller clinics in neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic, and pediatric vaccine clinics. I also volunteered at the Health Department's COVID-19 call center and as a COVID-19 contract tracer and case investigator. These opportunities gave me a unique opportunity to cross paths with other Alexandrians from different walks of life, and I have left every event prouder of being a resident of this City.

However, I am writing to express my disappointment at the lack of community engagement or consideration by the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Alexandria Planning Commission on the application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Avenue. I only learned about changes in the original application through public filings of the final document, interpreting these documents as a non-subject matter expert with other impacted neighbors, and attending the Planning Commission meeting on January 4, 2024. Beyond these filings and forum, we were never given an opportunity to learn about changes, exchange concerns, or explore alternatives with the City Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant, even though my residence and those of my neighbors would be negatively affected by this new single-family residence with a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit.

This lengthy letter seems to be the last opportunity for community-level input. The first and only opportunity for dialogue was hosted by the Del Ray Citizen Association (DRCA), which did its job in allowing for deliberation and voting in opposition to this SUP (re. letter sent to Mr. Moritz, Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning). But, instead of following up with DRCA's letter and those of my neighbors, the Department of Planning and Zoning responded through a final report that recommended approval of the SUP permit. Not only did their official report not address the significant concerns in those letters, it only raised more questions. We only wished for dialogue and the Planning and Zoning Staff didn't respond to our requests. Adding to the sting was that we first learned about adaptations at the Planning Commission meeting, after the Staff filed their report and recommendations.

I am in full agreement with my neighbor's and DRCA's concerns and since there is no other opportunity for dialogue with the Planning and Zoning Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant. I am presenting my main concerns through this letter and hopefully as verbal testimony to you, as our City Council.

- Firstly, our residences are part of the Hooffs Run Watershed that sit on-top of underground streams that drain into the very-active Hooffs Run. Most of the recent flooding events, specifically those off Monroe Avenue and off Commonwealth Avenue in the Rosemont Neighborhood, are associated with our watershed. The streams

immediately underneath and surrounding our residences have not been disturbed since our multi-unit townhomes were built in the late 1930's with sump pumps being a necessity. My sump pump routinely runs multiple times during dry periods and almost continuously during rain and snow events. It also takes several days for the large "puddles" on the 404A E Alexandria lot to absorb into the ground after a modest rain event, confirming that the soil is already water-logged by active streams with little capacity for additional run-off. Building a solid structure that runs to the edge of the lot with a predominantly underground footprint will stress these active sub-terrain streams. Since our townhomes are below 404A E Alexandria, it is highly likely that the streams will be diverted and focused into our basements if the proposed building is constructed. My own sump pump is unlikely to handle increased demand and I would predict that putting in a single-family home at 404A E Alexandria could make the surrounding ten homes unlivable given their age and cost for reinforced infrastructure.

- Secondly, the only vehicular access to the proposed unit is through a small public alley off Mount Vernon Avenue. Approving this permit will increase the danger to our immediate community by converting a lightly-used alleyway into an active vehicular thoroughfare. Driving onto Mount Vernon Avenue from this alley means that the driver must first cross an active sidewalk connecting the Braddock Road Metro Station, GW Middle School, and the rest of Alexandria to Del Ray's "downtown" core. Then, the driver must carefully navigate onto Mount Vernon Avenue after passing parked cars at the edge of the alley entrance, with additional effort that car and bicycle cross-traffic is aware given that the entrance is not obvious (as it is in the middle of the block) or visible from the street. There have been several occasions of cars blocking the alley because visitors thought it was a viable parking spot. The City's refuse, recycling, and compost collection staff also will not attempt to drive down the alley and instead service our townhomes by parking on Alexandria Avenue and walking down the alley. The detached Accessory Dwelling Unit described in the SUP application has its own dedicated kitchen and laundry in addition to those within the main building, elevating concern that the proposed construction is for two separately-resided buildings. This alley and its intersection with the sidewalk and Mount Vernon Avenue is not designed for the likely increased traffic pressure introduced by two new family units at 404A E Alexandria and regular services such as Amazon or other delivery providers.
- Most shockingly, during verbal testimony provided by the staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning at the Planning Commission meeting, one significant justification for their final recommendation was based on the proposed goals of Zoning For Housing/Housing For All (ZFH). My love of the diversity and inclusivity of this City should show that I am in full support of ZFH and I applaud the Council's leadership on this issue. However, the residence described in the application for this SUP does not address the vision as it is proposed as a single-family residence (although this counters the design, as mentioned above) that the applicant testified is intended to be a rental. If these are rented, I highly doubt these will be offered at sub-market rental rates as this is not described anywhere. The intended use and design of these buildings are not the model that should represent the vision of ZFH and it is insincere to make that claim. I remain disappointed that these City Staff wanted to distract the lack of substance in their report by politicizing an issue unrelated to this SUP application.

Our family focused our housing search on Alexandria when we were moving back to this region after several years in Seattle. After living in eight different cities, Alexandria is the only city I have ever wanted

to put down roots, a commitment that resulted in the purchase of our first home. The past five years have been nothing but amazing, including new routines of weekend walks throughout Alexandria's diverse neighborhoods, enjoying the multitude of cuisines from Old Town and Arlandria to the West End, and partaking in multiple events, festivals, farmer's markets, and local theater. We typically find ourselves comparing Alexandria during our vacations, often to the detriment of the cities we're visiting.

As you review this SUP application and my comments, I also ask the City Council to recognize that this review process lacked transparency and community engagement, with concerns filed by my neighbors and DRCA remaining unaddressed. This process has been disappointingly frustrating, and I am speaking as a resident who loves Alexandria and the community represented by its residents and dedicated civil servants.

Again, thanks for this opportunity to voice my concerns. I welcome a call, email, or opportunity to meet if you have any questions about the content of this letter or want to learn more about my concerns about this application or the lack of transparency and engagement in its review.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (with Yashin Lin)

1407 Mt Vernon Ave

markdlim@gmail.com

My name is Matt Kaim, and my residence is 1413 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301. I am writing to you to respectfully ask you to reject special use permit 2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Ave.

This request is consistent with at least 12 immediate neighbors, as well as that of the Del Ray Citizens' Association (DRCA) and its Land Committee to deny the permit.

My request is based on the following:

1) My property is directly N/NW and within very close proximity of the proposed structures. I am highly concerned with high risk of damage to my 85 year old home from shock and vibration from all of the excavation and construction equipment that would need to frequently travel the public alley off of Mt Vernon Ave (and directly next to my house) and perform heavy construction work on the vacant lot.

2) I am highly concerned with additional flooding of my property due to disruption of the lot and runoff from new structures, including a proposed basement the size of the lot. My backyard is the lowest point amongst all properties within proximity and it gets flooded every time it rains. My crawl space also takes in incredible amounts of water (like a sieve) every time it rains. There are underground springs in the neighborhood that cause the ground to get supersaturated quickly, and already a sink-hole next to (and likely below) the alley off of Mt Vernon Ave, closest to the street. Please see photo below of my backyard during a recent storm.

3) I am highly concerned with damage to my property, including my fence and cars parked in my parking area, from construction equipment trying to drive down the alley to the lot. As it stands now, trash and other utility vehicles cannot make it down the alley.

4) While the transportation lead from the planning commission staff indicated that a car "could" maneuver to park at and leave the proposed parking pad without having to encroach onto my property, that analysis needs to be looked at. I have owned my property for over 14 years and can personally attest to the difficulty in maneuvering in that space.

5) The geometries of the alleys are already dangerous and visibility of people/children in the alleys is bad. Adding another home and ADU, which the applicant said will be used as a short term rental, will add much more risk given the number of renters who are not familiar with the alleys.

6) Noise levels from the proposed home/ADU otherwise crammed in to lot that is too small will be a nuisance. We're already dealing with traffic and pedestrian noise on Mt Vernon and E Alexandria.

7) While additional measures for fire protection "could" be included in the building plans in order to obtain a waiver for >100' from the street for emergencies, there are no plans for fire protection during construction. This leads to undue risk for all surrounding neighbors.

8) The plans are already at odds with the zoning guidelines and the non-frontage proposed structures turned 90 degrees from other homes do not meet the spirit or character of Del Ray.

9) The Planning Commission Staff did NOT meet with any of the residents to discuss any concerns before presenting their recommendation to approve the SUP to the Planning Commission. The Commission even stated that more coordination between the staff, applicant, and neighbors should have occurred, but it didn't.

10) The Planning Commission said during the hearing that property values will NOT be impacted by the proposed structures. They presented no evidence to substantiate this claim.

11) Fails §11-500 -FAR calculation incorrect – SR, p.17.

The DRCA warns that 404A's design is dependent "on the basement square footage being excluded from the FAR calculation." DRCA points out that the Applicant argues the basement does not count as FAR, and treats the ADU as "detached" even though "there are continuous interior spaces between the primary dwelling and the ADU." (SR, p. 93). DRCA questioned whether the basement would comply as being "below the average grade calculation." Yet, the

CSR's ignore this observation, and simply accept at face value the Applicant's FAR calculation, choosing not to do their own. This needs independent analysis.

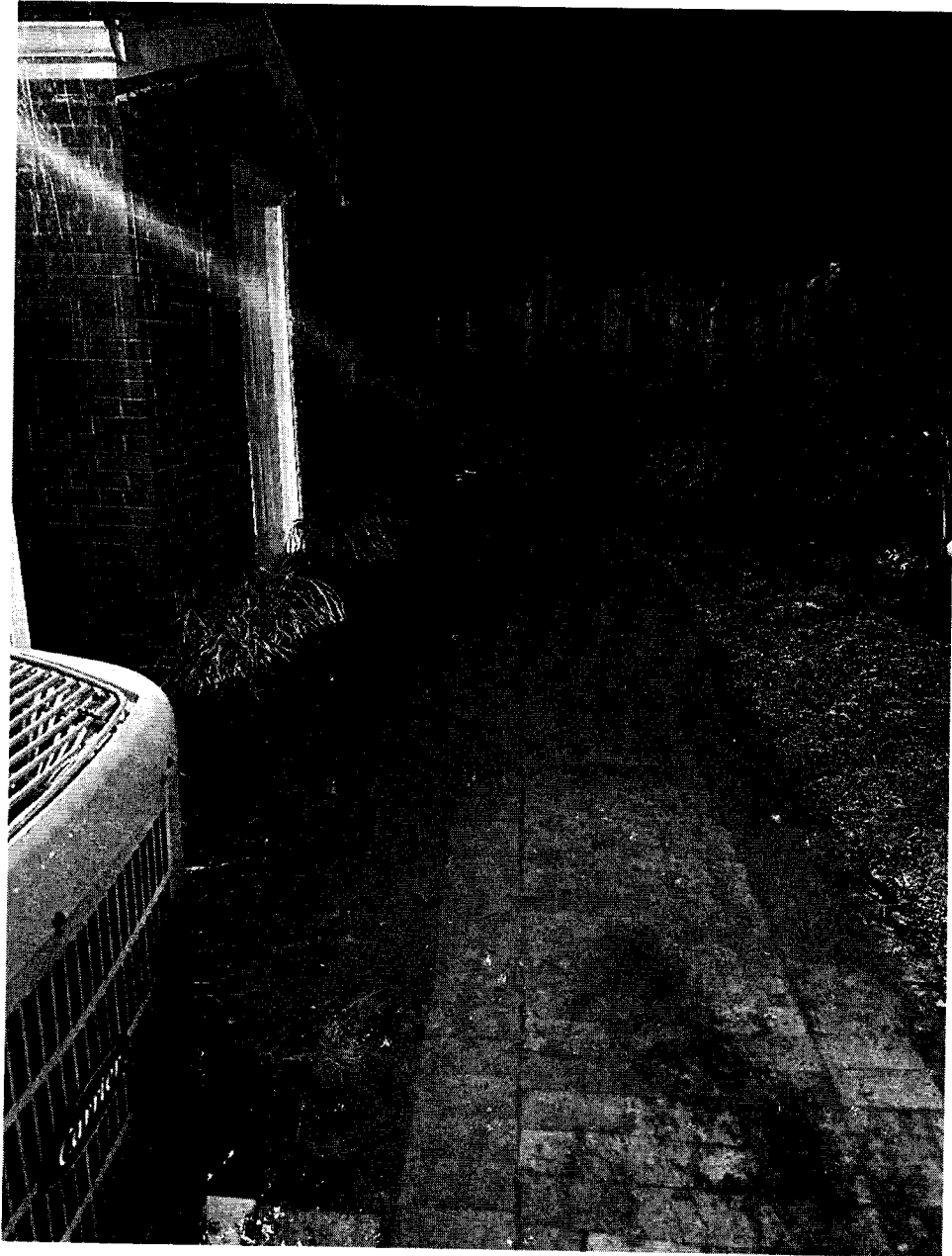
12) Breach of ADU rules:

The Developers have admitted they will not be living in either the primary residence, nor the ADU, but will lease both out (one as an AirBnb). The DRCA points out this is not allowed under zoning code section 7-203.B6 which requires that the owners of the property live in the primary residence at the time they apply for an ADU permit. (SR, p. 94) They note that this language was added by city council in 2021 to ensure that the majority of ADUs were not used as short-term rentals or "by a developer to build out the maximum envelope of a site pushing the sale price higher rather than providing additional affordable housing." If this SUP is approved, the city council will set a new precedent of allowing developers to use ADUs as profit centers rather than avenues for affordable housing.

13) The Planning Commission voted 4-3 to support the SUP. However, the Commissioner disagreed with the suggestion by multiple board members to defer the SUP and simply forced the vote.

Thank you for your consideration.

Matt Kaim, 703-731-3782



CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Mary Ellen <maryellen.file@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 9:07 PM
To: Catharine Rice
Cc: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: Re: Please Vote NO on SUP 2023-00076//404A East Alexandria on March 12

You don't often get email from maryellen.file@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I urge you to vote NO on this.

Mary Ellen File
1401 Mount Vernon Avenue

Sent from my iPad

On Mar 11, 2024, at 2:21 PM, Catharine Rice <catharine.rice@gmail.com> wrote:

Apologies. Re-attaching with **the corrected SUP #.**

----- Forwarded message -----

Attached is a slightly modified version of comments filed earlier this year when this SUP was originally to be heard by the council. As a resident on East Alexandria Avenue, I urge you to please vote NO tomorrow night on the basis that these two dwellings placed on this tiny substandard lot will not be compatible with the existing neighborhood character, will diminish or impair established property values of surrounding homes, and will have an adverse impact on the character of the neighborhood, traffic conditions, utility facilities, public health safety and general neighborhood welfare.

Please know that to approve this Application would mean you would also be establishing an historical, new SUP precedent for developers to use for R2-5 housing construction in Del Ray that is at odds with our basic zoning guidelines, our commitment to the historic preservation of the character of Del Ray, the recent ADU rules, and the intent of our new Housing for All zoning rules to bring in new housing, but not by crowding up R-2-5 lots with multiple buildings.

--

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "404A Del Ray Neighbours" group.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to 404a-del-ray-neighbours+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.

To view this discussion on the web visit <https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/404a-del-ray-neighbours/CABX6JphLq9JVa7p5fhq2zTmNhcFwvZErSC4m2Rk2b%2BfgG%3DHR7Q%40mail.gmail.com>.

For more options, visit <https://groups.google.com/d/optout>.

<Vote No on SUP 2023-00076--404A East Alexandria.pdf>

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Ingrid Allen <ingridsallen@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 7:13 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: Justin Wilson; Alyia Gaskins; Amy Jackson; John Chapman; Sarah Bagley; Canek Aguirre; Kirk McPike
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Opposition to SUP #2023-00076

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ingridsallen@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To Mayor Wilson and City Councilors:

I am Ingrid Allen, resident of 416 E Alexandria Ave. - just down the street from the proposed project at 404 E. Alexandria.

I am OPPOSED to this project for the following reasons:

1. The lot size is way too small for a lot in our immediate area
2. The lot is too small for a single family Home let alone a SFH AND an ADU
3. The proposed design is not in character with the EXISTING neighbors' homes
4. The home design is not even close to being in character with the EXISTING neighborhood.
5. The lot size is NOT common or compatible with other SF developed lots.
6. There are no SF developed Lots having NO STREET FRONTAGE and by definition, are not compatible!

The incompatibility and oddity of the non street frontage/alley lot and Home by definition will negatively impact property values of surrounding homes.

Please vote NO on SUP #2023-00076!!

Thank you, Ingrid Allen

--

Ingrid S. Allen
ingridsallen@gmail.com
202-415-0362

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Paula Kara <paula@sfn.org>
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 11:51 AM
To: Justin Wilson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Amy Jackson; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Opposition of SUP #2023-00076

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Dear Members of City Council,

I am writing again to express my opposition to the proposed SUP #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Avenue. And I want to thank the members of Council who replied to my previous emails.

Once again, there are multiple concerns about lot 404A – I will focus this communication on just a few.

It's not just that the lot is substandard in size, it also lacks street frontage, and the percentage of open space currently required by the City. These three issues are significant, but they are not the only issues.

Another major concern is flooding of the nearby homes with the removal of soil and most likely multiple trees. Adjoining houses already have flooding issues, construction will just exasperate the issue and cost the adjoining homeowners money and time.

If construction occurs, the homes adjacent to lot 404A will decrease in value. While the assessments may remain the same, or increase, the homes will become less desirable to buyers. There are no other homes built on similar lots in Del Ray with lack of street frontage. This proposal does not fit within the character of Del Ray, nor does it comply with **Section 12-400**.

City council, upon consideration of the special use permit, finds that the proposed development

- will not unreasonably impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, - will **not diminish or impair the established property values in the surrounding areas**, and
- **will be compatible with the existing neighborhood character**.

The Del Ray Land Use Committee recommended rejection of the SUP. It is still unclear, even after meeting with staff from Planning & Zoning, why P&Z recommends approval. I don't feel that I received clarification on any of the issues raised during the March 4 meeting with P&Z staff.

For these reasons, and for others previously mentioned, I ask that the Council not grant approval for SUP #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Avenue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Paula Kara

Owner/Landlord: 1411 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301

Owner/Resident: 310 E. Windsor Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301

Phone: 703/307-7678

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: MD Lim <markdlim@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 11:02 AM
To: Amy Jackson; Justin Wilson
Cc: John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]3/12 Council Public Hearing: Opposition to SUP 2023-00076 (404A E. Alexandria Ave)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Dear Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the residents of the City of Alexandria, thank you for your leadership of this City. I urge you to reject Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 at the City Council legislative meeting on March 12, 2024, and hope that to finally have the opportunity to provide a testimony.

I wanted to thank those Members who responded to me and my neighbors' emails to learn our perspectives about the deleterious impact on our homes if this SUP were approved. We only wished to have similar empathy from the Staff at the Department of Planning and Zoning. My neighbors span the spectrum of perspectives on Del Ray's growth but after self-learning about the SUP process and City Regulations, we are in agreement that the City Staff has not been objective and borderline deceptive. In addition to their multiple mistakes leading this City Council discussion, the Staff have not been sincere in their efforts to engage us and instead have been manipulative and held their ground on their original position without a willingness to compromise. To say that this frustration has led to distrust would be an understatement.

Their first missed opportunity to foster a discussion followed Del Ray Citizen Association's public vote to oppose the SUP on November 7, 2023. The second missed opportunity was after the split 4-3 vote by the Planning Commission on January 4, 2024. It wasn't until Mayor Justin Wilson urged a discussion between the City Staff, neighbors, and Applicant after the February 4, 2024, administrative decision. Then the City Staff finally reached out via an unannounced door-to-door campaign on a three-day holiday weekend (February 17) that was less than a week from the postponed discussion on February 24 (that was subsequently delayed by their error). This could only be interpreted as a way to divide our voices and check the box in hopes that none of us are available, as there was no email or written announcement of their visit. Another meeting on March 4 included several of my neighbors, but unfortunately, we were out-of-town on travel on that day.

In supplement to my previous email (below), I wanted to summarize my rationale in asking you to reject the SUP on March 12.

- The increased flooding risk will make many of our homes inhabitable given the infeasibility of further updating our 1939-built townhomes that are immediately west of 404A Alexandria. Through sump pumps, our houses are below elevation to 404A and already run routinely to mitigate excess water brought into our basements on dry days. Given that 404A is almost-always saturated on a minor rain event and underground streams drain the Hooff's Run Watershed, it is highly likely that a predominantly underground footprint of both an adjoined primary unit and ADU that runs against the lot borderline will increase the flooding pressure on our homes. The older trees that will be killed due to the planned development of this

SUP will further increase the flooding potential as they currently are another reservoir for the underground water.

- The increased traffic on Mount Vernon from a poorly-visible alleyway will endanger the pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles, particularly the children walking to/from GW Middle School and commuters heading to/from Braddock Metro. The alley is not visible going Southbound on Mt Vernon Avenue because of a tall fence and parked cars that make it hard to see. It is also unexpected by cross-traffic as it is a) the only middle-of-the-block alley way on Mt Vernon Avenue, b) barely 10 feet in width and without crosswalks or other signage, and c) less than 200 feet from a major intersection where cars / bicyclists / pedestrians are more likely to focus their attention, rather than on this alleyway. Given the lack of street frontage, no one would expect cars or service vehicles to be crossing the sidewalk or into Mt Vernon Avenue.
- The lot is defined as substandard for multiple reasons and given that it is on-record that the intended use of the property is as rental properties, the SUP does not describe a project that would be in-character with the immediate neighborhood or, as the City Staff likes to allude, does not represent the vision of Zoning For Housing.
- Alexandria Times has investigated and shared many of the concerns about this property
 - <https://alextimes.com/2024/02/city-makes-second-mistake-in-public-engagement-process-for-404a-east-alexandria-ave/>
 - <https://www.alxnow.com/2024/03/07/del-ray-accessory-dwelling-unit-proposal-raises-concerns-about-short-term-rentals/>
 - <https://alextimes.com/2024/01/what-to-watch-at-saturdays-council-public-hearing/>

Again, thank you for reviewing and considering this recommendation to vote in opposition of this SUP application. I hope for an opportunity to share my testimony as part of the verbal arguments and in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me by email if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Mark Lim (and Yashin Lin)

1407 Mount Vernon
markdlim@gmail.com

On Mon, Feb 19, 2024 at 7:43 PM MD Lim <markdlim@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Mayor Justin Wilson, Vice Mayor Amy Jackson, and Honorable Members of the City Council for the City of Alexandria,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my recommendation to reject the Special Use Permit #2023-00076 that will be discussed as item #12 on the docket for City Council's Public Hearing on February 24, 2024. I submitted my written testimony via the City Council portal on Alexandria.gov and pasted it below, welcoming any opportunity to share my perspective or answer any questions.

Respectfully,

Mark

1407 Mount Vernon Avenue

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your leadership representing the interests of our community. As the final check-and-balance to a process that seems to be steam-rolled by City Staff and the Applicant, I ask you to reject the Special Use Permit application #2023-00076 at the City Council hearing on February 24, 2024, as Docket # 24-1854. Below my signature is my written testimony for the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024. Rather than repeat that letter, I wanted to further share why I recommend that you consider rejecting this application.

My residence will be directly impacted if this substandard lot is developed as designed in the application. The lack of community engagement and disregard for community opinion by the Applicant and Department of Planning and Zoning Staff remains appalling. Those affected by this application remain united in opposition, as shown by: Mayor Wilson's comments at the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024 (quoted below); an Alexandria Times article calling this a "contentious issue" on January 17, 2024; a split 4-3 vote by the Planning Commission on January 4, 2023; and formal opposition by the Del Ray Citizen's Association sent to the Department of Planning and Zoning on November 20, 2023. Amongst this public opposition and contention, the Applicant and Staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning have not offered a forum for discussion or resolution.

None of the letters supporting this application were authored by affected neighbors, except for one who welcomed "new neighbors in our immediate area and the diversity in housing". As the applicant responded to Planning Commissioner Koenig's question on January 4, 2024 (4 hrs : 9 mins) "Ideally our plan would be to rent it long term, year lease" without mention in the application or subsequent reports that this development would be rented at below-market rates. This property is not an example of Zoning For Housing, a vision of which I'm supportive as the City continues to grow. But, that vision is disingenuously applied in this letter of support and by the Staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning who justified their recommendation against the opposition of Del Ray Citizen's Association at the Planning Commission Public Hearing. Zoning for Housing should include sincere engagement of the community and the steam-rolling to advance this specific application is an example of what not to do.

As Mayor Wilson said at the City Council's Public Hearing (2 hrs : 56 mins), "There has been considerable disagreement between the applicant and residents...let me encourage the applicant and the neighbors to get together...and have some conversation about the areas of disagreement and see what possible could be agreed to." My neighbors who would be negatively impacted if this permit is approved represent different interests in this City's growth. However, this lack of engagement by the Department of Planning and Zoning staff and Applicant has brought us together to learn and share what is happening at 404-A E. Alexandria Avenue. It was through these forums that I learned: a) about the application and potential impact to my residence (only one paper sign was posted in a non-obvious location on E. Alexandria Avenue, a sign that has been missing for weeks), b) that some neighbors reached out to the Department of Planning and Zoning and not received a response, and c) that not all impacted neighbors received an invitation to the one-and-only introduction by the Applicant in November 2023. This meant that we had to quickly learn about the utility of a Special Use Permit and the review process, search historical public records of our residence and community, and provide testimonies to Del Ray Citizen's Association, Planning Commission, and City Council. Beyond those forums and particularly given the public perception of this issue, the applicant and/or staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning had multiple opportunities and ample time to do outreach but failed to do so. Instead, we learn about updates on the Staff Report through formal reports submitted to dockets of the City Council Public Hearings.

The Applicant and the City Staff have not reached out to me, even though my email address is publicly available as written testimony. Another missed opportunity was at the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024, where about 20 of us planned to provide verbal testimony or support. Upon learning about the delay, we all met in the overflow room to discuss next steps. The Applicant entered the room, saw all of us and instead of joining the discussion, left the room to consult with Mr. Sam Shelby of the Department of Planning and Zoning who waited in the hallway. The door to the overflow room is glass and we were at the entrance, so they could not have missed us as I clearly saw them in discussion. But, both left without saying a word, missing an opportunity for transparent discussion and furthering concerns that City Staff sides with the Applicant and are not interested in talking with us.

Instead, Planning Director Mr. Karl E. Moritz reached out to two neighbors by email on Friday, February 16, 2024, at 5:19 p.m. EST, asking to meet. This outreach, one week prior to the City Council Public Hearing, three weeks after

Mayor Wilson's recommendation, and after 5pm on the Friday before a three-day weekend, can be seen as nothing but devious. I did not receive this invitation. Fortunately, we developed an email list among affected neighbors after the City Council meeting, with many of us changing our Saturday plans to meet with Mr. Moritz and Mr. Shelby with less than 24 hours notice. When I asked Mr. Moritz why I wasn't invited to the discussion, he said that he didn't have my email address (I had to remind him about the written testimony) and that he was planning on going door-to-door. Their unannounced door-to-door campaign on the Saturday of a three-day weekend would have occurred *after* meeting my neighbors. None of this makes practical sense and furthers speculation that this was a last-minute and insincere attempt to "check the box" on engaging the community a week before the postponed Public Hearing.

As mentioned in my original testimony, I remain concerned about the increased underground flooding to my basement and the increased risk to pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic on Mount Vernon Avenue. At the impromptu Saturday meeting, Mr. Moritz and Mr. Shelby did not provide comment on the flooding potential and seemed to agree with the poor visibility of cross pedestrian and vehicular traffic after we walked down the alley, acknowledging that this may be the only alley on Mt Vernon Avenue that is in-the-middle of a block. Given their lack of engagement, I was still disappointed that neither were prepared to answer those concerns, even though it was raised in several written testimonies submitted by myself and others.

Again, thank you for your leadership and opportunity to provide my comments in advance of the discussion on February 24, 2024. Please do not hesitate to email me at markdlim@gmail.com if you have any questions about the content of this testimony, the one submitted for the City Council Public Hearing on January 20, 2024 (pasted below), or would like to discuss my frustration on the lack of engagement by the Applicant and staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (and Yashin Lin)
1407 Mount Vernon Avenue

Previous written testimony sent to City Council Members for January 20, 2024 hearing

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your continued service representing the best interests of our community. Change is not easy, particularly for a city with extensive historical roots, and as you steer our City through Northern Virginia's growth, I remain proud of your leadership in ensuring that Alexandria maintains a healthy and inclusive community.

The health of our community has embodied a personal obligation to contribute through community service. To date, I have volunteered over 400 hours to the Alexandria Health Department's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team. This includes weekends supporting and supervising: annual mass influenza vaccination events, several COVID-19 mass testing events, large COVID-19 vaccine clinics that immunized over a thousand community members to smaller clinics in neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic, and pediatric vaccine clinics. I also volunteered at the Health Department's COVID-19 call center and as a COVID-19 contract tracer and case investigator. These opportunities gave me a unique opportunity to cross paths with other Alexandrians from different walks of life, and I have left every event prouder of being a resident of this City.

However, I am writing to express my disappointment at the lack of community engagement or consideration by the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Alexandria Planning Commission on the application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Avenue. I only learned about changes in the original application through public filings of the final document, interpreting these documents as a non-subject matter expert with other impacted neighbors, and attending the Planning Commission meeting on January 4, 2024. Beyond these filings and forum, we were never given an opportunity to learn about changes, exchange concerns, or explore alternatives with

the City Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant, even though my residence and those of my neighbors would be negatively affected by this new single-family residence with a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit.

This lengthy letter seems to be the last opportunity for community-level input. The first and only-opportunity for dialogue was hosted by the Del Ray Citizen Association (DRCA), which did its job in allowing for deliberation and voting in opposition to this SUP (re. letter sent to Mr. Moritz, Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning). But, instead of following up with DRCA's letter and those of my neighbors, the Department of Planning and Zoning responded through a final report that recommended approval of the SUP permit. Not only did their official report not address the significant concerns in those letters, it only raised more questions. We only wished for dialogue and the Planning and Zoning Staff didn't respond to our requests. Adding to the sting was that we first learned about adaptations at the Planning Commission meeting, after the Staff filed their report and recommendations.

I am in full agreement with my neighbor's and DRCA's concerns and since there is no other opportunity for dialogue with the Planning and Zoning Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant. I am presenting my main concerns through this letter and hopefully as verbal testimony to you, as our City Council.

- Firstly, our residences are part of the Hooffs Run Watershed that sit on-top of underground streams that drain into the very-active Hooffs Run. Most of the recent flooding events, specifically those off Monroe Avenue and off Commonwealth Avenue in the Rosemont Neighborhood, are associated with our watershed. The streams immediately underneath and surrounding our residences have not been disturbed since our multi-unit townhomes were built in the late 1930's with sump pumps being a necessity. My sump pump routinely runs multiple times during dry periods and almost continuously during rain and snow events. It also takes several days for the large "puddles" on the 404A E Alexandria lot to absorb into the ground after a modest rain event, confirming that the soil is already water-logged by active streams with little capacity for additional run-off. Building a solid structure that runs to the edge of the lot with a predominantly underground footprint will stress these active sub-terrain streams. Since our townhomes are below 404A E Alexandria, it is highly likely that the streams will be diverted and focused into our basements if the proposed building is constructed. My own sump pump is unlikely to handle increased demand and I would predict that putting in a single-family home at 404A E Alexandria could make the surrounding ten homes unlivable given their age and cost for reinforced infrastructure.
- Secondly, the only vehicular access to the proposed unit is through a small public alley off Mount Vernon Avenue. Approving this permit will increase the danger to our immediate community by converting a lightly-used alleyway into an active vehicular thoroughfare. Driving onto Mount Vernon Avenue from this alley means that the driver must first cross an active sidewalk connecting the Braddock Road Metro Station, GW Middle School, and the rest of Alexandria to Del Ray's "downtown" core. Then, the driver must carefully navigate onto Mount Vernon Avenue after passing parked cars at the edge of the alley entrance, with additional effort that car and bicycle cross-traffic is aware given that the entrance is not obvious (as it is in the middle of the block) or visible from the street. There have been several occasions of cars blocking the alley because visitors thought it was a viable parking spot. The City's refuse, recycling, and compost collection staff also will not attempt to drive down the alley and instead service our townhomes by parking on Alexandria Avenue and walking down the alley. The detached Accessory Dwelling Unit described in the SUP application has its own dedicated kitchen and laundry in addition to those within the main building, elevating concern that the proposed construction is for two separately-resided buildings. This alley and its intersection with the sidewalk and Mount Vernon Avenue is not designed for the likely increased traffic pressure introduced by two new family units at 404A E Alexandria and regular services such as Amazon or other delivery providers.
- Most shockingly, during verbal testimony provided by the staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning at the Planning Commission meeting, one significant justification for their final recommendation was based on the proposed goals of Zoning For Housing/Housing For All (ZFH). My love of the diversity and inclusivity of this City should show that I am in full support of ZFH and I applaud the Council's

leadership on this issue. However, the residence described in the application for this SUP does not address the vision as it is proposed as a single-family residence (although this counters the design, as mentioned above) that the applicant testified is intended to be a rental. If these are rented, I highly doubt these will be offered at sub-market rental rates as this is not described anywhere. The intended use and design of these buildings are not the model that should represent the vision of ZFH and it is insincere to make that claim. I remain disappointed that these City Staff wanted to distract the lack of substance in their report by politicizing an issue unrelated to this SUP application.

Our family focused our housing search on Alexandria when we were moving back to this region after several years in Seattle. After living in eight different cities, Alexandria is the only city I have ever wanted to put down roots, a commitment that resulted in the purchase of our first home. The past five years have been nothing but amazing, including new routines of weekend walks throughout Alexandria's diverse neighborhoods, enjoying the multitude of cuisines from Old Town and Arlandria to the West End, and partaking in multiple events, festivals, farmer's markets, and local theater. We typically find ourselves comparing Alexandria during our vacations, often to the detriment of the cities we're visiting.

As you review this SUP application and my comments, I also ask the City Council to recognize that this review process lacked transparency and community engagement, with concerns filed by my neighbors and DRCA remaining unaddressed. This process has been disappointingly frustrating, and I am speaking as a resident who loves Alexandria and the community represented by its residents and dedicated civil servants.

Again, thanks for this opportunity to voice my concerns. I welcome a call, email, or opportunity to meet if you have any questions about the content of this letter or want to learn more about my concerns about this application or the lack of transparency and engagement in its review.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (with Yashin Lin)

1407 Mt Vernon Ave

markdlim@gmail.com

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From: Angela Rice <riceangie@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 10:55 AM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP 2023-00076 AGAINST

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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You don't often get email from riceangie@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor and City Counselors,

My name is Angela Rice, and my family and I live at 408 E Alexandria Ave abutting the vacant Substandard lot being heard on March 12.

Im asking that you to deny this application on the grounds that

- 1) it **will impair property values** of the abutting semi detached homes and the townhomes on Mount Vernon Ave and
- 2) is not in character with the existing neighborhood in lot size, lack of street frontage, as well as design of the proposed home** as per the substandard lot approval regulations.

The proposed design and orientation of the home and ADU (which I will add the Staff incorrectly shows on the presentation as **oriented East to West, while they are actually proposed to be oriented South to North**) will impair the value of the abutting properties by creating the one place in Del Ray where the Semi Detached homes on E Alexandria Ave and the Townhomes on Mount Vernon Ave will be situated with an odd contemporary home AND an ADU with NO STREET FRONTAGE a few feet from all of those properties. This will be the only place in Del Ray where this situation will occur. Townhomes and semi detached homes are common in Del Ray and if this project is approved, the owners of these abutting homes will be required to lower the sales price to encourage potential buyers to purchase here. Buyers will purchase elsewhere in Del Ray where this situation does not occur. **This Development WILL IMPAIR Property Values and must be denied.**

This proposed development IS NOT compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood. The planning staff admits as much in the staff report, while continuing to pledge support for the project as a 'creative way to make more housing'. It's neither creative nor appropriate. The P&Z staff writes in the Staff report that there are no other lots in Del Ray developed with a single family home that has **NO Street Frontage**. By definition this makes in **Not Compatible**. The staff also notes there are no lots in the immediate surrounding blocks that have a Single Family home developed on a townhome sized Lot. Again, by definition this is **Not Compatible**. Lastly, P&Z staff admits there are no other contemporary homes in the immediate surrounding blocks, and admits this would be the first, and acknowledged that they did not advise or work with the applicant to attempt to design a home that fit with the existing pattern book of Del Ray. Again, by definition and as required by the ordinance, the home is **NOT compatible** with the existing developed neighborhood.

Section 12-400 reads in part "will be compatible with the **existing neighborhood character**."

The ordinance does NOT provide an avenue to intentionally " Change " the existing character as the City Staff has proposed.

Section 12-400.

(C)
City council, upon consideration of the special use permit, finds that the proposed development
- will not unreasonably impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, - **will not diminish or impair the established property values in the surrounding areas**, and
- **will be compatible with the existing neighborhood character.**

For the reason noted above, and per section 12-400, The City Council must deny this application.

Respectfully,

Angela Rice

Angela Rice, PT, DPT, NCPT

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Singh, Raj <raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 07, 2024 8:28 AM
To: Justin Wilson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Amy Jackson; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP #2023-00076: SAY NO to 404A East Alexandria

Some people who received this message don't often get email from raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

ALCON,

I am writing again to log my **opposition** to SUP20223-0076 on the substandard property at 404A east Alexandria Ave. As all of my immediate neighbors have already registered their thoughtful and reasonable concerns/issues, I wont go into the minor details again.

- 1) If approved, the homes surrounding this property **will** flood.
 - a. This vacant lot, absorbs a lot of rain water through a root system consisting of a complex network of individual roots that vary in length and age. Vacant lots city wide may cumulatively infiltrate 50% plus additional annual rainfall volume as compared to built lots.
 - b. Historically, green infrastructure (GI; the use of soils, plants, and landscape design to control stormwater) has been introduced across urban areas as a decentralized, distributed approach to reduce sewer system overflows and to deliver other tangible benefits.

Please make the right decision, not the easy one.

V/r,

-raj and kim singh

From: Singh, Raj
Sent: Thursday, February 15, 2024 3:03 PM
To: justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov; john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov; Canek.Aguirre@alexandriava.gov; Amy.Jackson@alexandriava.gov; alyia.gaskins@alexandriava.gov; Kirk.McPike@alexandriava.gov; Sarah.Bagley@alexandriava.gov; councilcomment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: raj.singh.kumar@gmail.com
Subject: SUP #2023-00076: SAY NO to 404A East Alexandria on 24 FEB

My name is Raj Singh and I am the owner of 404 E Alexandria. I am writing, **again**, in **opposition** of the Special Use Permission (SUP) application for 404 A E Alexandria lot (Applicants: Eric Teran and Daniela Gross).

1. Del Ray Citizens Association recommended not supporting SUP (see attached file)
2. Building an ADU is **against** zoning code as this is not their primary resident nor will it be at project start.
 - a. City Council approved ADU policy on January 23, 2021 at their regular public hearing. City Council amended the policy to include the following: **Require homeowners to maintain primary residence of the subject property at the time of ADU construction.**
 - b. Link to bullet a ([Accessory Dwelling Units in Alexandria | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#))

- c. Mr Teran is on record (4 Jan meeting) stating he WILL NOT live at the property
- 3. It fails 12-401: Applicants disregard for the community and neighbors is egregious as this two-dwelling design is 100% out of character for the neighborhood and immediate area.
 - a. It does not meet the basic standard of the neighborhood and surrounding area
- 4. There is no frontage. This is uncharacteristic of any other house in Del Ray and increases foot traffic in an active alley raising the risk of pedestrian accidents
 - a. Safety will decrease due to increased traffic in an alley not built with visual clearances
 - b. Trash trucks, firetrucks, UPS, FEDEX, etc are not able to enter the alleyway
- 5. Planning commission vote was 4-3; resulting in a controversial approval
- 6. Planning commission was misguided when comparing lots, comparing lot sizes with street frontage with this application with a lot with no street frontage (as every teacher in our school district would say "Apple and Oranges")
- 7. All immediate neighbors are against this build
 - a. Would you want a house built behind a dozen homes?

I am unable to attend the 24 FEB meeting but am sending this e-mail with the hope you take it into consideration and deny this application.

V/r,

-raj and kim singh

Raj Singh
 Department of Homeland Security
 OFFICE: Microsoft Teams
 MOBILE: 202.897.8175
 e-mail: raj.singh@hq.dhs.gov

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Ann Kammerer <ann.kod@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 05, 2024 9:38 PM
To: Justin Wilson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Amy Jackson; Alyia Gaskins; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Opposition to SUP #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Ave.

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ann.kod@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Alexandria City Council Members

I'm writing again to express my opposition to the SUP application for development at 404a E. Alexandria Ave in Del Ray.

I've lived at 1403 Mt Vernon Ave, a nearly adjacent property to the one in question, since 1998.

The design of the house and ADU, the undersized lot, and the lack of street frontage, are not keeping with the surrounding neighborhood. In response to neighbors' concerns about the street frontage issue and size of the lot, city staff gave comparisons to townhouses in the surrounding area, not to single family homes. Staff also admitted there are no houses in the surrounding area without street frontage.

The developers have indicated that they don't intend to live on the property. They'll be renting the property, and the ADU, which will exacerbate already tight parking in the area. Doesn't the person applying for the ADU permit need to reside in the house at the time the ADU permit is sought?

There is a legitimate concern on the part of all the neighbors that this development is going to have an impact on water runoff and flooding of our residences. It will also negatively affect our property values.

The lack of street frontage, safety concerns regarding fire service access, and past flooding issues all weigh on my feelings about the project.

It's worth noting that Del Ray Citizens Association recommended that the SUP be rejected--which staff left out of their report summary. And that the Planning Commission vote was a close 4-3 vote.

And lastly, this entire process from the start has been marred by lack of communication and haphazard community engagement. (For example, I was not contacted at all about staff's plans to meet with neighbors at the site earlier in February.)

I urge you to reject this SUP application.

Ann Kammerer
1403 Mt Vernon Ave
Alexandria VA 22301
703-732-0012

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Gloria Sitton

From: Amy Jackson
Sent: Wednesday, March 06, 2024 9:33 PM
To: Gloria Sitton
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL]SUP 2023-0076

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

For the letters this week.
Thanks

Amy B. Jackson, Vice Mayor
Alexandria City Council
Office: 703.746.4500
Cell: 703.215.5558
amy.jackson@alexandriava.gov

From: Bridget Donohue <bkdonohue1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 7:41 PM
To: Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Ernie Pickell <pickell@comcast.net>; Alyia Gaskins <alyia.gaskins@alexandriava.gov>; Canek Aguirre <Canek.Aguirre@alexandriava.gov>; Amy Jackson <Amy.Jackson@alexandriava.gov>; Sarah Bagley <sarah.bagley@alexandriava.gov>; John Chapman <john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov>; Kirk McPike <kirk.mcpike@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SUP 2023-0076

Some people who received this message don't often get email from bkdonohue1@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)
RE: SUP 2023-0076

I am writing to register my opposition to the proposed development of a substandard property at 404A East Alexandria Ave. Many of my neighbors have already registered their numerous and reasonable concerns with the City Council, Planning and Zoning staff, and the Del Ray Citizens Association Land Use Committee. I share their opposition, though my particular concern is flooding.

Any recommendation to approve this proposal is antithetical to Alexandria's goals of mitigating stormwater runoff and reducing flooding. The proposed construction can only exacerbate those issues. 404A is currently a vacant lot which, situated at a low point of the block, and aided by the trees around it, absorbs considerable water. It remains marshy long after an average rainfall. With the proposed buildings, an enormous basement, and the expected loss of up to 4 mature trees, we will lose this buffer against nature. Rainfall will have no place to go, except over land and to the surrounding homes, alleys, and streets. The 400 and 500 blocks of East Alexandria Avenue and surrounding alleyways (behind Luray, Glendale and Nelson, for example) and intersections (E. Nelson and Dewitt, and all along Mt. Vernon Avenue, for example) are known to experience flooding and property damage in the extreme. Fortunately, over the last few years, City staff worked **actively** with our neighborhood stormwater group to identify and remediate flooding issues specific to this area. Approval of this SUP is counter to our efforts.

With SUP 2023-0076, the developer proposes a lot-line to lot-line basement, displacing about half the 2660 sf parcel's below grade soil. The central living areas: living room, kitchen, laundry, utilities, bathroom, a 4th bedroom, and an entrance courtyard will be below ground, with window wells for light (and flooding). Only 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, and a

master suite would be above-ground. Placing over half the house below ground allows the applicant to request to shoehorn an additional nearly 400sf ADU, without exceeding FAR. I was only half-joking when I suggested, In a hastily arranged meet-up with Planning and Zoning Director Karl Moritz on February 17th, the proposed basement and courtyard will be a swimming pool after the first big storm, and that perhaps it should just be planned as a cistern. At that meeting, Mr. Moritz did not satisfactorily explain the Planning Commission's rationale for ignoring the proposed plans' obvious deficiencies, or the DRCA Land Use Committee's recommendation to oppose this SUP; nor could he resolve our concerns about the impact this project might have on the properties and mature trees around it.

Though the applicant wants an investment property in Del Ray, there is scant evidence he is at all invested in the neighborhood. The applicant advises he plans to rent the house and AirBnB the requested ADU. Because he will not live here, his family will not experience the devastating loss of their personal possessions due to the inevitable flooding. They will not be present to witness the resultant damage to their (not)neighbors' properties. (Notably, I could not help noticing his architectural renderings do not even spell Del Ray correctly.) At a March 4 P&Z staff-facilitated meeting with the applicant and concerned neighbors, the applicant seemed surprised by the issues we raised, and brushed off concerns about damage from construction and flooding with the assertion that insurance companies would cover it. As one example, the applicant advised he intends to avoid flooding by connecting directly to the city sewer lines, but so do all of our waste lines. Where is his sump water going to be discharged? These details, like others in the project, are apparently not quite hammered out, which is not reassuring; but as they say, the devil is in the details. Is the additional tax revenue generated from this tiny parcel worth it?

At the conclusion of the March 4th meeting Mr. Moritz indicated our concerns were not persuasive for P&Z to change its recommended APPROVAL of this SUP. I urge you to reject that recommendation.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts. I invite your feedback. We expect heavy rain tonight. I'd be happy to show the area tomorrow, or anytime before the March 12 City Council meeting.

Bridget Donohue, 422 East Alexandria Avenue, 22301 (703) 887-7132

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