

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 7, 2014

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

FROM: HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

SUBJECT: CONCEPT REVIEW WORK SESSION #1 FOR 500 NORTH UNION STREET
(FORMERLY ROBINSON TERMINAL NORTH) BAR CASE # 2014-0119

I. SUMMARY

Concept Review Work Session

The material now before the Board is part of a BAR Concept Review Work Session for the mixed-use project proposed at 500 North Union Street, the site of the present warehouse complex locally known as Robinson Terminal North, located on the north side of Oronoco Street at its intersection with North Union Street bounded by Pendleton Street to the north, and the Potomac River to the East.



Fig. 1: Ariel view of the existing Robinson Terminal North complex, looking west

The northern boundary of the Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD) along the waterfront is Oronoco Street, so the proposed development is adjacent to but entirely to the north and outside of the boundaries of the local historic district and does not require a Permit to Demolish or a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction. In addition, the entire project area is outside the limits of the National Historic Landmark and the National Register Historic Districts. However, Development Guideline #8 of the adopted Alexandria Waterfront Small Area Plan states: “Redevelopment proposals shall require review on an advisory basis by the Old and Historic District Board of Architectural Review prior to being considered by the Planning Commission and City Council prior to approval.”



Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing boundaries of the Old and Historic Alexandria District

Staff, therefore, recommends that the BAR review this project using the same format as a BAR Concept Review Work Session. The BAR’s Concept Review Policy was originally adopted by the two Boards of Architectural review in May 2000 (attached) to advise the Planning Commission and City Council during the development review process (DSP or DSUP) on the overall appropriateness of the height, scale, mass and general architectural design character of proposed new construction prior to a formal Permit to Demolish or a Certificate of Appropriateness review by the BAR. Recommendations of the Board during the work sessions are not binding on the applicant and are simply advisory to the Planning Commission and City Council in their deliberations for the Development Special Use Permit.

Site History

The site includes two, late-20th century warehouse buildings, one on the west side of North Union Street and one on the east side, and a large concrete pier over the river. A portion of the site lies above West’s Point, the earliest continuously occupied site in the city, with its early 18th century wharf the likely location of Alexandria’s original tobacco warehouses and the arrival port for Major General Edward Braddock’s forces in March 1755. Further research on the history of this site is ongoing and a Due Diligence Archeological Assessment by the applicant’s history consultant, Thunderbird Archeology, has been provided (attached).



Figure 3: 1749 shoreline superimposed over the 1845 shoreline. Aerial photograph - Waterfront Master Plan

Proposal

The purpose of this work session is to introduce the applicant's vision for the site with a schematic site layout which includes mass and context studies and illustrative images. No building elevations will be presented at this time. The applicant is seeking Board feedback during this work session on proposed building footprints, building scale/mass, materiality, streetscape/landscape plans, public/semi-public open space plans and building/park/historic district viewsheds.

Existing Buildings

The two existing, late-20th century warehouse buildings on the site were constructed in the late 1960s and mid-1970s¹ after the original buildings on the two properties, which dated back to the 19th century, were demolished. Both of the existing warehouses on the site will be demolished as part of the development plan. Based on staff's research, the buildings do not contain any particular architectural or cultural significance. However, the site may have foundations or other remnants of the earlier 19th century structures, which will be evaluated separately by Alexandria Archaeology during the Development Review process.

Proposed Site Plan

The proposed development is for two new, mixed-use buildings on the site. The east building, facing the waterfront, will have commercial space on three sides of the first floor with residential units above. The west building will also have some commercial space on the first floor with residential units above at each end, flanking a new hotel located in the center of the building. There are two, garage entrances into the site. The west building will be accessed from Pendleton Street and the east building from North Union Street. The concept site plan also illustrates recreational areas and sidewalk improvements on North Union Street (15' and 12' on the west and east sides respectively.) The semi-public and public spaces are proposed along the north, south and west sides of these two buildings and the existing deep water pier will be retained and

¹ Based on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1896.

continued to accommodate larger ships and to be opened for the use of the public, as required by the Waterfront Plan.

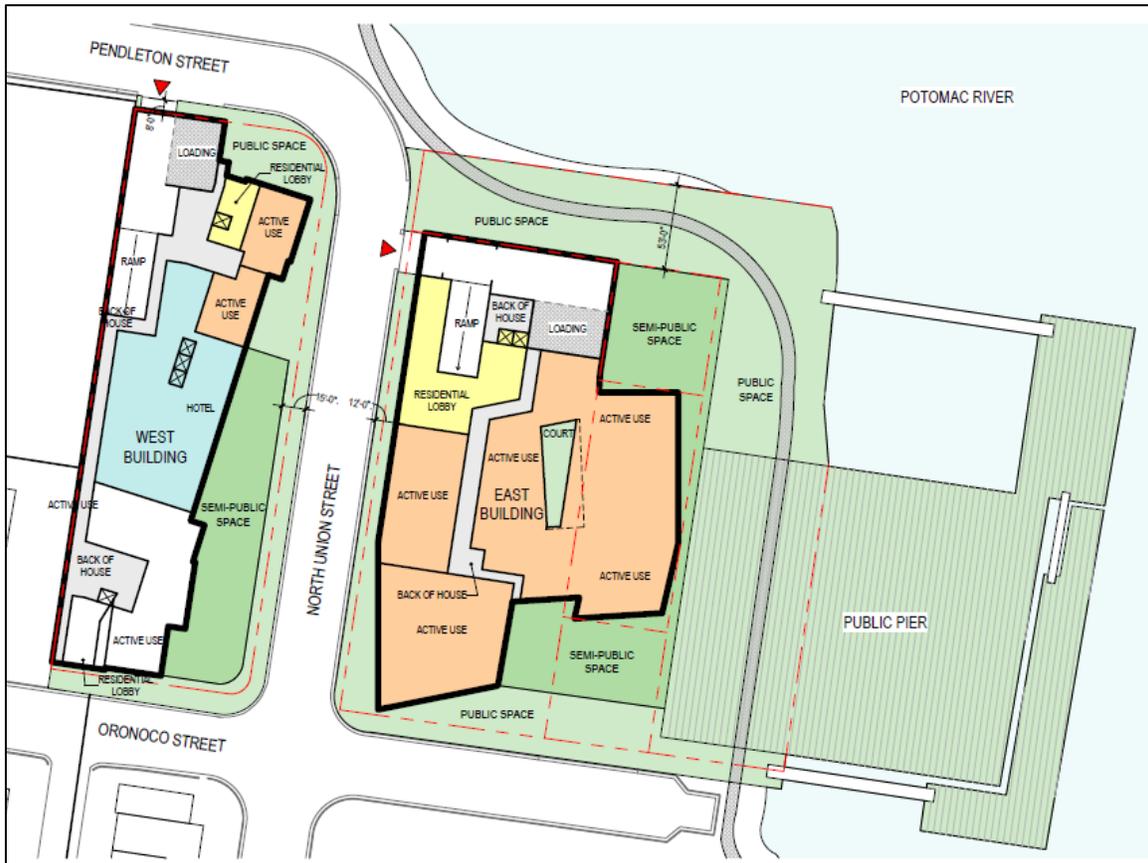


Figure 4. Applicant's proposed site plan

Pendleton Street will be extended as a waterside promenade along the south shore of Oronoco Bay and out to the Potomac River to meet the public pier. The promenade will extend from the pier and join with the existing trails in Founder's Park. No additional information on materials or design has been submitted by the applicant at this time.

The proposed massing study shows the bulk and scale of the buildings stepped down from Union Street toward the water with the maximum permitted height of 66 feet on the parcel west of North Union Street. The heights east of North Union Street are limited to 45 feet on Parcel D and 30 feet on Parcel C, as described in the applicant's prior federal settlement agreement.

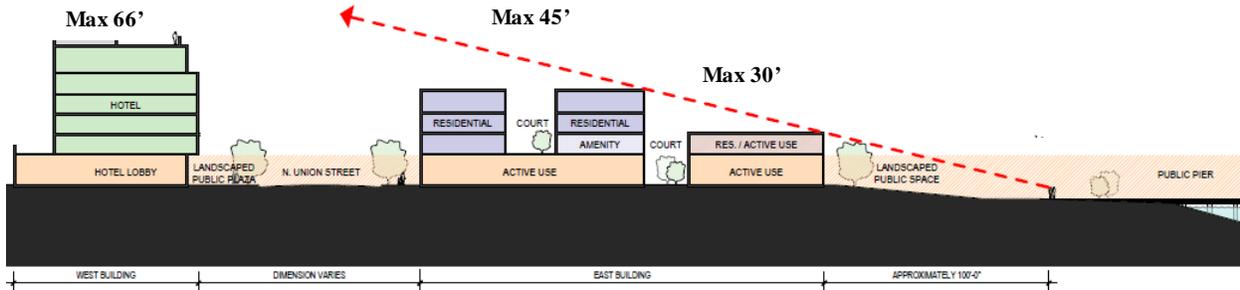


Figure 5. Cross Section of Proposed Building Heights

While no architectural elevations have been submitted as part of this initial concept review, the applicant has provided a massing study and several images for illustrative purposes. Based on the information provided, the preliminary design direction is for irregular building massing with a very contemporary use of traditional materials - masonry buildings with oversized glazing containing stepped and angled surfaces and a possible large projecting eave or awning. As encouraged by the waterfront plan, the buildings have been positioned on the site to maximize water views from buildings, streets and rooftop open spaces. The street frontage along Union, Pendleton and Oronoco, as well as the river, are activated and public-welcoming with retail, restaurants, and a hotel use. Since the buildings do not have secondary elevations, the loading dock and back-of-house functions for the hotel and restaurant are located within the core of the buildings.

Due to the fill requirements for floodplain mitigation, the grade will change along the Oronoco frontage for both buildings. The applicant has provided an image of how this transition could potentially be treated especially in the east building's adjacent public space. Such a scheme could become a feature along the waterfront and utilized as an outdoor gathering spot or during events and festivals as informal amphitheater-like seating.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Although the BAR is only advising the Planning Commission and the City Council about the appropriateness of the building's design for this project, staff recommends that the Board still evaluate the proposed new construction using the criteria adopted in the BAR's *Design Guidelines*, particularly Chapter 8, Buildings Along the Waterfront; and the *Additional Standards: Potomac River Vicinity*; in the zoning ordinance. In addition staff recommends that the *Waterfront Development Guidelines* and the standards and guidelines of the *Additional Regulations for the Potomac River Vicinity Height Districts* in zoning ordinance sec. 6-404(B)(3) be used as a basis for evaluation.

The urban design aspects of this project are being simultaneously reviewed by the Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee, under their mandate in the zoning ordinance to insure compliance with the adopted urban design guidelines for Old Town North.

General Analysis of Plans and Further Study

Within the historic districts, the Board utilizes the *Design Guidelines* to determine if a potential new building would be compatible with nearby buildings of historic merit. The *Guidelines* do

not mandate the use of historic styles for new construction. However, they do state that where new buildings recall historic building styles, that the architectural details used throughout the building be consistent with that same style but that the building should not be a slavish replica of any particular building in the district. Additionally, the *Design Guidelines* also note that “new and untried approaches to common design problems are encouraged and should not be rejected out of hand simply because they appear to be outside the common practices outlined in the guidelines.”

This particular site is extremely important due to its visual prominence along the Alexandria waterfront and location at the northern edge of the historic district boundary. The site will help define and frame the district’s northern boundary, as well as the park’s activity areas, and presents great opportunities for creative, yet contextual buildings. The Waterfront Plan’s *Development Guidelines* also encourage modern designs inspired by historic precedent while maintaining compatibility with nearby residential neighborhoods.

Aside from the cultural and archaeological importance of West’s Point, there are no remaining historic resources immediately adjacent to the site. The closest historic building is several blocks away. The surrounding land uses include office buildings to the west, parkland to the north, and residential townhouses and parkland to the south. The scale and mass of these adjacent non-historic properties provide the immediate context for this site. While no building elevations are shown, the building cross sections and the massing study of the west building in the applicant’s package indicate that the buildings will rise from two stories in height on Parcel C, to four stories on Parcel D to six stories on Tract 1. This overall height appears consistent with the height of adjacent buildings.

The approved Waterfront Small Area Plan envisioned a I-shaped building for west of Union Street and an E-shaped building for the east side of Union (see Figure 6 below.)



Figure 6. Conceptual Design in Waterfront Small Area Plan

The applicant's proposal features a footprint configuration that is very different from the Waterfront Plan which the designers believe will promote the sightlines and views to Oronoco Bay and Founder's Park at the north and south ends of the site. While staff strongly supports a contemporary building, and the overall site plan appears to function well, staff is concerned that it will be difficult for building elevations to express the historic Alexandria precedent for this modern design through the seemingly arbitrary angles shown in the plan. The two precedent images showing substantial glazing on a contemporary masonry building on sheet UDAC-02 of the applicant's package inspire much more confidence than the plan.

Staff encourages the exploration of contemporary elements with a foundation in traditional materials and forms, particularly on the waterfront side of the site. As the Waterfront Plan Development Guideline #7 suggests, a warehouse architectural vocabulary that is pronounced in its fenestration, rhythm and form, is an appropriate inspiration and a timeless approach in this particular location. Whether or not the design team utilizes this recommended design direction, the ultimate goal is compatible but contemporary buildings with a great sense of transparency on the waterfront side to allow the buildings to be clearly distinguished from the historic buildings of Old Town. It is important that the transition from the more traditional building forms which align with the street grid on the south and western portion of the site to the proposed contemporary buildings be smooth and logical.

As the applicant designs the buildings proposed for this project, it will be essential in the future to provide detailed elevations of each building, as well as larger contextual views of how the different buildings and components interact with each other and the district as a whole.

The Potomac River Vicinity Standards

Staff has included below the additional standards for the Potomac River Vicinity described in the Zoning Ordinance that the Board utilizes to evaluate new construction along the Waterfront. Staff's comments as to how the Standards are satisfied or need further study are found below. At this point, without any architectural elevations upon which to comment, it is impossible to note whether the additional standards are met and recommends that the applicant continue to incorporate the standards as the design evolves.

(a) The degree to which facades of a proposed building or buildings are generally in alignment with the existing street edges and express the 20- to 30-foot bay width typically found within the historic district. Techniques to express such typical bay width should include changes in materials; articulation of the wall surfaces; changes in fenestration patterns; varying roof heights; and physical breaks within the massing. Large expanses of unbroken or repetitive facades are disfavored.

(b) The degree to which building materials characteristic of buildings having architectural merit within the historic district are utilized. The texture, tone and color of such materials should display a level of variety, quality and richness at least equal to that found abundantly in the historic setting. The use of synthetic or imitative materials is disfavored.

(c) The degree to which new construction reflects the traditional fenestration patterns found within the historic district. Traditional solid-void relationships (i.e., masonry bearing wall by a veneer system) should be used in building facades which are directly related to historic streetscapes.

(d)The degree to which new construction on the waterfront reflects the existing or traditional building character suitable to the waterfront. "High style" or highly ornamented buildings are disfavored. Also disfavored are metal warehouses and nondescript warehouse-type structures.

(e)To the extent that any provisions of [section 10-105\(A\)\(2\)](#) are inconsistent with the provisions of this [section 10-105\(A\)\(4\)](#), the provisions of this section shall be controlling.

Potomac River Vicinity Height District

Section 6 of the Zoning Ordinance requires compliance with the following standards and guidelines for buildings located in the Potomac River Vicinity Height District #3 in order to receive an SUP to increase the height from 30' to 50'. The building proposed on the east side of Union Street is within height district #3, which is the area east of Union Street to the river and extends from Pendleton Street south to the Wilson Bridge. This building is also subject to a prior separate settlement agreement with the federal government which limits the east building to 30' on the east side and 45' on the west. No penthouses may exceed the height limit on the east building. The building on the west side of Union Street is in height district #4 and is permitted to be 66' tall by right.

The applicable requirements for the east building are as follows:

(a) The degree to which imaginative and creative architectural solutions advance recreational access to and enjoyment of the historic waterfront from public streets and other public areas. Buildings should be in harmony with existing buildings of genuine architectural merit, to be found in the historic district.

(b) The degree to which the basic 30 feet height is maintained at the street faces and the waterfront face of the proposed building or buildings. To provide a transition, building heights over this basic height level should be set back from the street faces and waterfront faces.

(c) The degree to which the height, mass and bulk of the proposed construction are compatible with and reflect the traditional height, mass, and bulk of buildings and structures displayed within the streetscapes of the historic district.

(d) The degree to which imaginative and creative architectural solutions enhance views and vistas from public streets and other public-access areas along the historic waterfront. The waterfront faces of the buildings, in particular, should be designed and integrated so as to enhance pedestrian enjoyment of the waterfront, and the quality and character of the historic waterfront, as a totality, when viewed from passing vessels.

(e) The degree to which the use or uses of the proposed building or buildings are compatible with historical waterfront-related uses in the City of Alexandria

Next Steps

Due to the scope and scale of this project, it is anticipated that the applicant will be returning to the BAR for multiple work sessions during the development review process.

At this time, staff recommends that the applicant continue to explore a design direction based on the general architectural vocabularies presented in the precedent images and continue to meet with staff to study the architectural character, larger planning considerations and context as the design evolves before returning to the BAR for another work session.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends:

1. That the Board find the overall site layout to be appropriate; and
2. That the applicant continue to work with staff to refine the site plan and explore an appropriate architectural character for the various buildings for presentation to the BAR at the next work session.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 – Supporting Materials*
- 2 – Draft Historical Overview Report*
- 3 – BAR Conceptual Review Policy, 5/3/00*

ROBINSON TERMINAL NORTH

URBAN DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

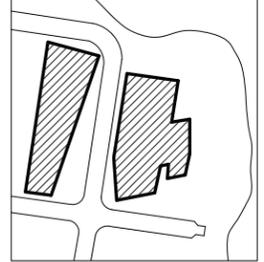
APRIL 16, 2014

DRAWING LIST

- UDAC - 01 GROUND FLOOR & PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAM
- UDAC - 02 URBAN SCALE & FABRIC
- UDAC - 03 CONNECTING PUBLIC SPACES
- UDAC - 04 STREETScape
- UDAC - 05 WATERFRONT VIEWS





LEGEND

- ACTIVE USE
- BACK OF HOUSE
- HOTEL
- RESIDENTIAL LOBBY
- PUBLIC SPACE
- SEMI-PUBLIC SPACE
-  LOADING ENTRANCE
-  PROPERTY LINE

GROUND FLOOR & OPEN SPACE PLAN

1" = 60'-0"

Project Name
ROBINSON TERMINAL NORTH

Client
CITY INTERESTS
ROONEY PROPERTIES

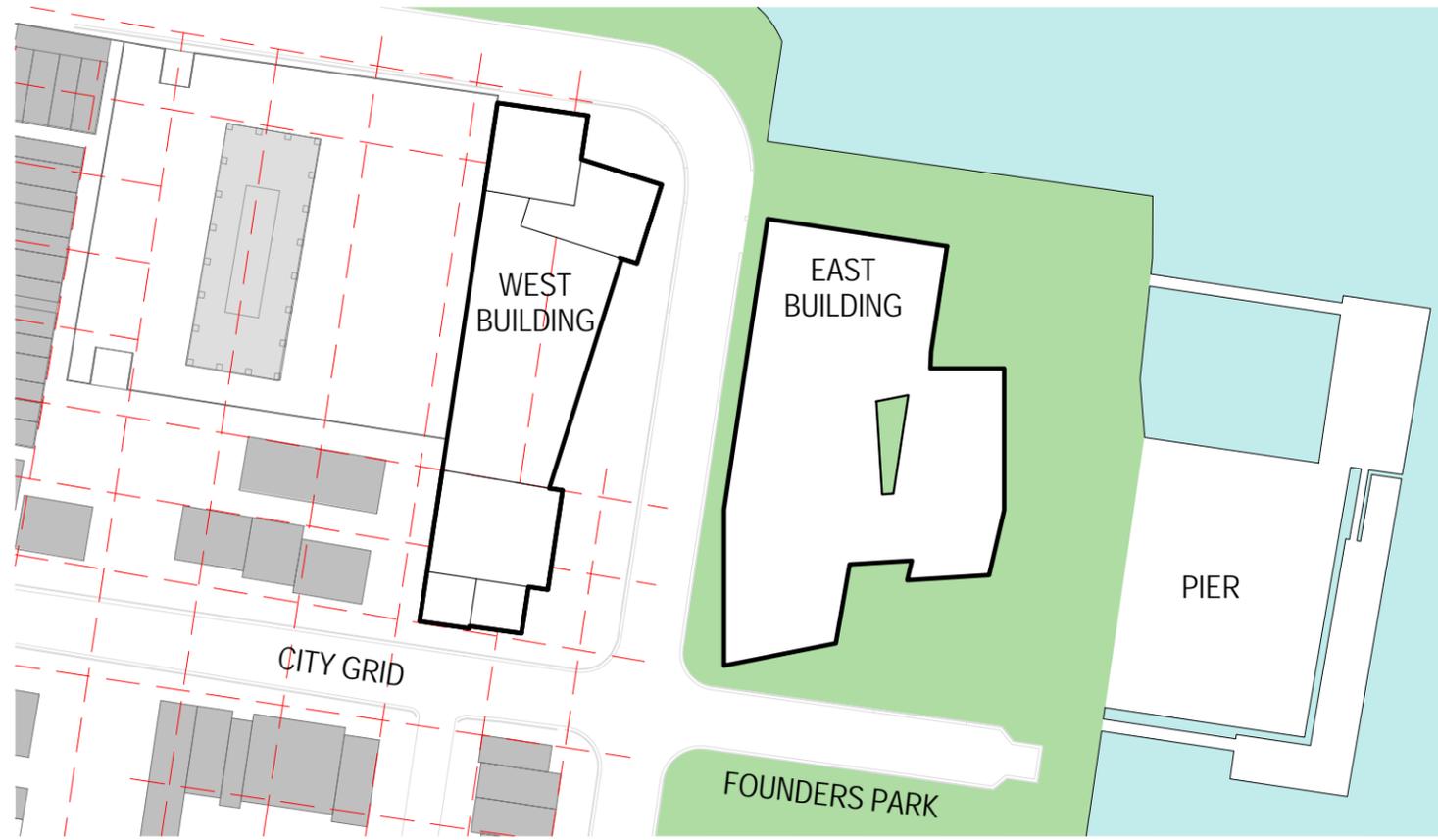
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GROUND FLOOR PLAN

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04/16/14

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Sheet Number
UDAC-01

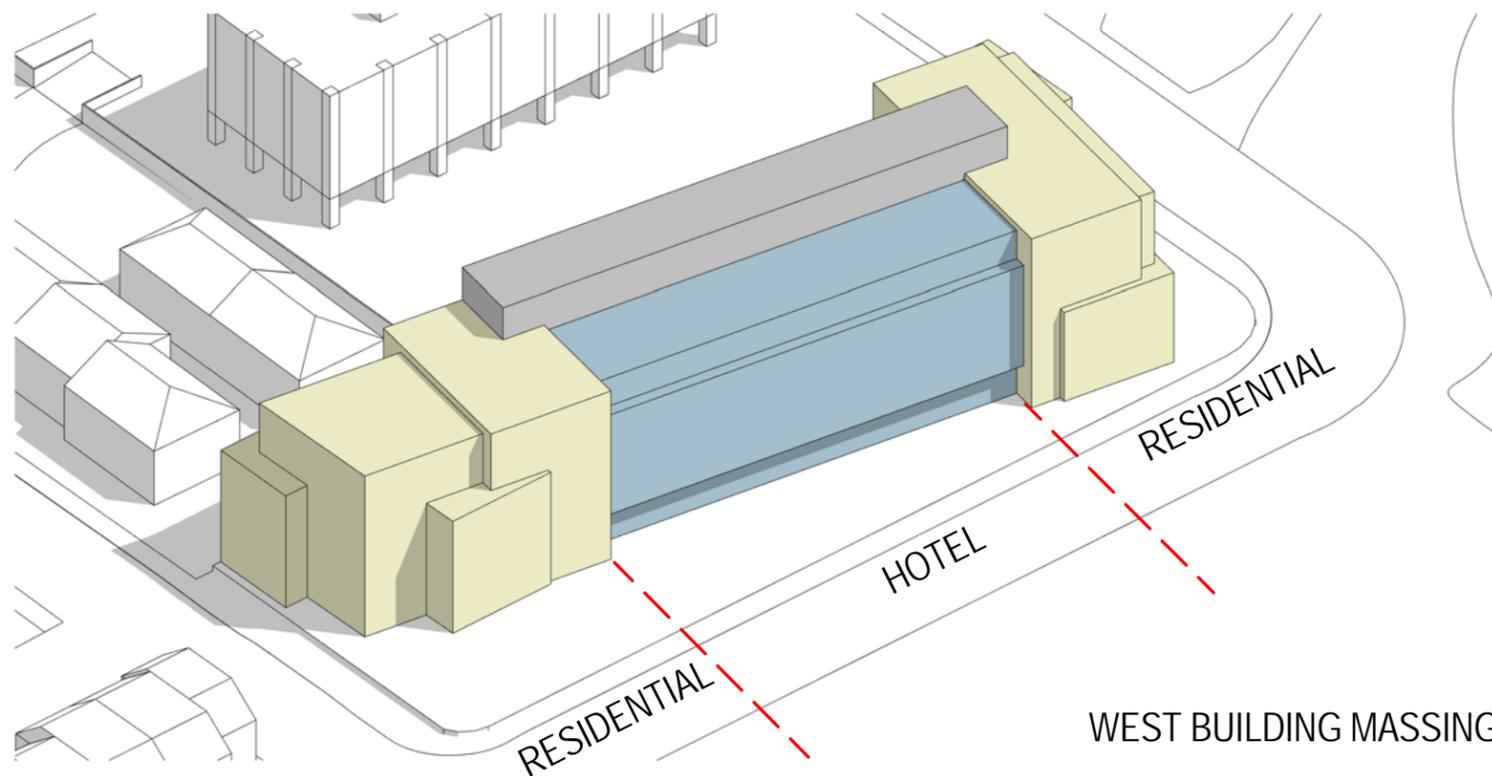




URBAN SCALE & FABRIC



FABRIC - MATERIALITY



WEST BUILDING MASSING



MASSING - STEPPED AND ANGLED SURFACES

Project Name
ROBINSON TERMINAL NORTH

Client
CITY INTERESTS
ROONEY PROPERTIES

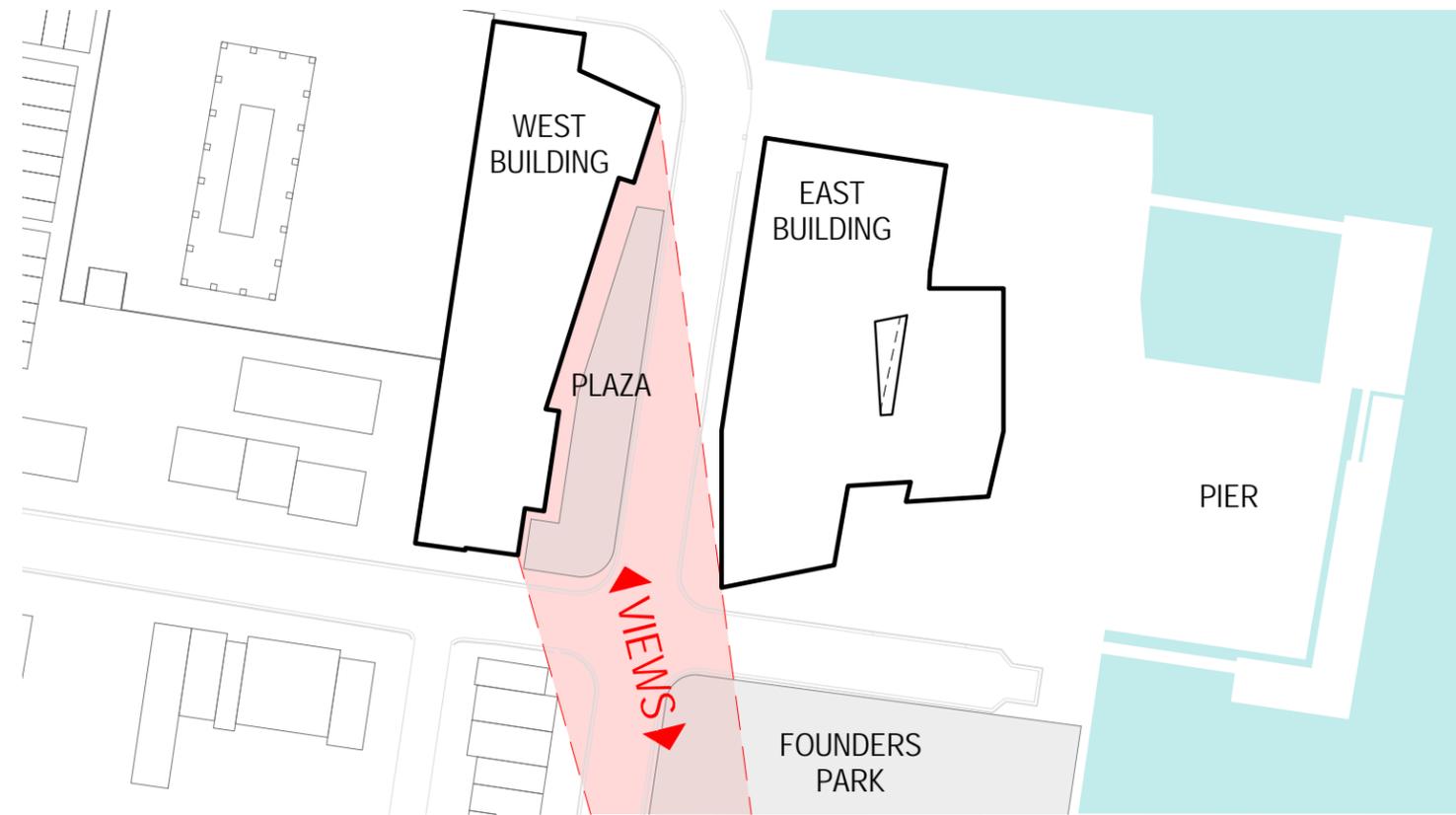
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URBAN SCALE AND FABRIC

Date
04/16/14

Scale
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Sheet Number
UDAC-02





VIEWS TO PUBLIC SPACE



PLAZA



FOUNDERS PARK



PARK WITH VIEW TO STREETScape BEYOND

Project Name
ROBINSON TERMINAL NORTH

Client
CITY INTERESTS
ROONEY PROPERTIES

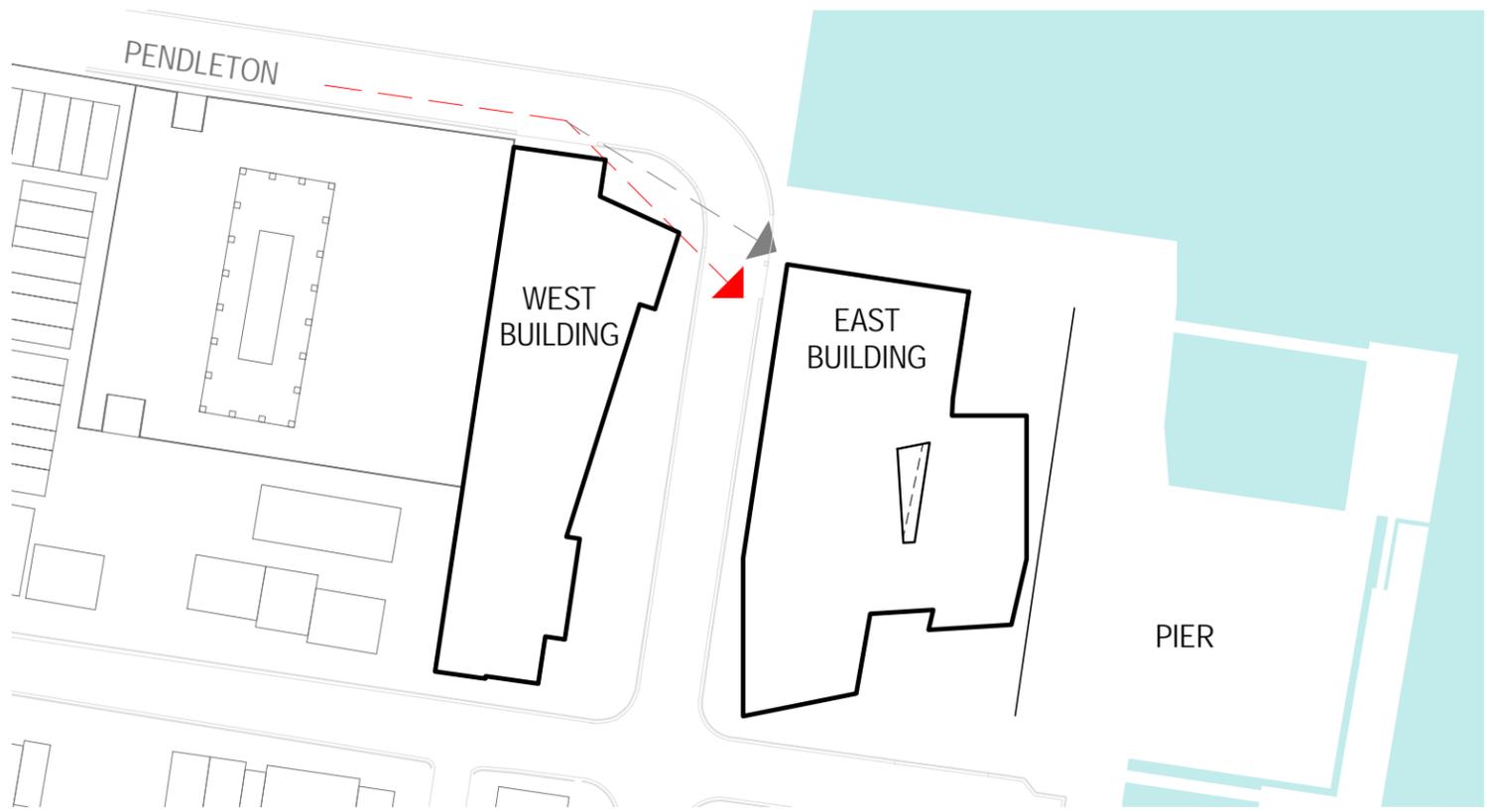
Sheet Name
CONNECTING PUBLIC SPACES

Date
04/16/14

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1 : 1440

Sheet Number
UDAC-03





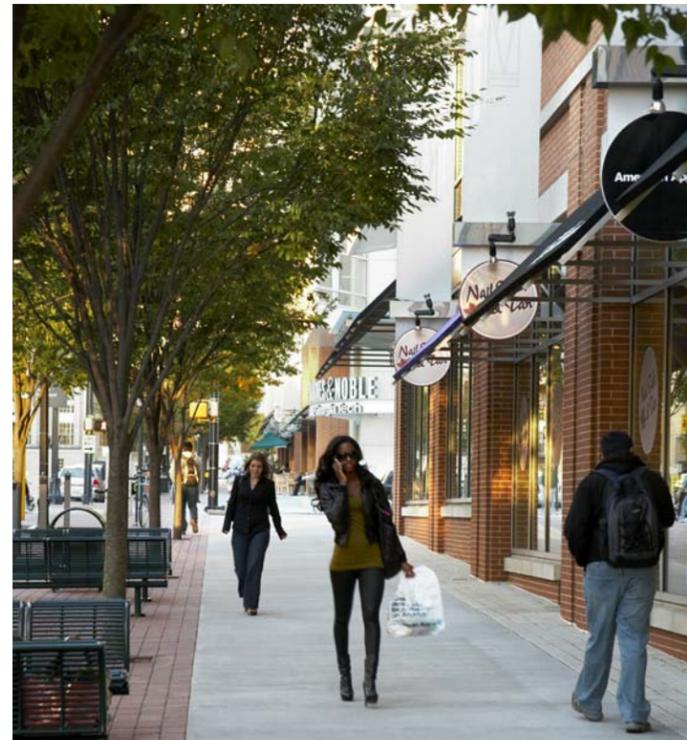
OPEN CORNER FOR PEDESTRIAN SAFETY



STREETSCAPE



STREETSCAPE



STREETSCAPE



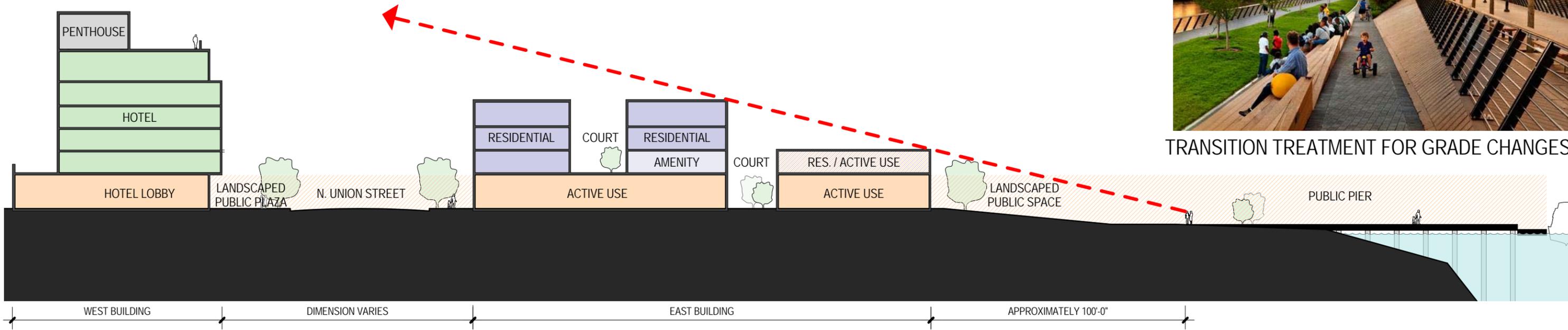
STREETSCAPE



OPEN CORNER FOR WIDER VIEWS TO PIER & WATER



BUILDING RECEDES TO REVEAL LANDSCAPE



TRANSITION TREATMENT FOR GRADE CHANGES

SECTION A: RESIDENTIAL USE IS SET BACK FROM PUBLIC VIEW

Project Name
ROBINSON TERMINAL NORTH

Client
CITY INTERESTS
ROONEY PROPERTIES

Sheet Name
WATERFRONT VIEWS

Date
04/16/14

Scale
As indicated

Sheet Number
UDAC-05



Due Diligence Investigation – Archeological Assessment

Robinson North Terminal

City of Alexandria, Virginia
WSSI #21619.02

Prepared for:
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2900 K Street NW
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October 28, 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thunderbird Archeology, a division of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. (WSSI) has completed an initial investigation of the Robinson North Terminal property (study area) located in the City of Alexandria (Exhibit 1). The investigation was conducted to assist Robinson North Terminal, LLC in the due diligence process of determining the extent and associated costs with cultural resources compliance. The investigation also identified prior historic resources located within the study area and evaluated the potential for locating intact archeological sites associated with these resources.

Based on our investigation, the proposed development of the Robinson North Terminal property will need to comply with local cultural resource protection laws. The Archeology Protection Code, which is located in Section 11-411 of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, requires developers to evaluate the effects of their projects on potential historic resources and take appropriate preservation actions if necessary. The Office of Historic Alexandria (Alexandria Archaeology) will likely require a Documentary Study (intensive archival research) and an Archaeological Evaluation (archeological excavations) for this development.

However, if any U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits are required for this project, or any other federal undertaking (federal loans, licensing, etc.) is involved, this project must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Our initial archival research and review of previous archeological investigations have revealed the types of archeological resources that may be present on the property, including evidence of 18th, 19th and 20th century wharf construction and derelict vessels at the base of the in-filled cove. Based on our investigation described in this report, our budget range estimate for potential future cultural resource work has now changed to \$343,000 to \$1,190,000.

John P. Mullen, M.A., RPA served as Principal Investigator on this project and conducted the archival research with the assistance of Associate Archeologists Edward Johnson and David Carroll. Jill Rosche prepared the exhibits. Archival research was conducted at the offices of Alexandria Archaeology and the Barrett Branch of the Alexandria Library (Special Collections). We would like to acknowledge the assistance of Francine Bromberg, Acting Alexandria Archaeologist, Ted Pullium, author and historian, who has conducted extensive research into the history of the Alexandria waterfront, and staff at the Office of Alexandria Archaeology.



 Project Area

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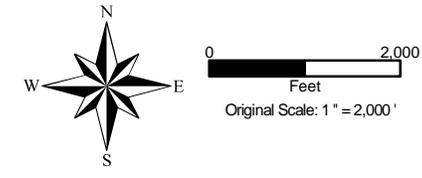


Exhibit 1 Vicinity Map

Robinson North Terminal

WSSI # 21619.02 - October 2013



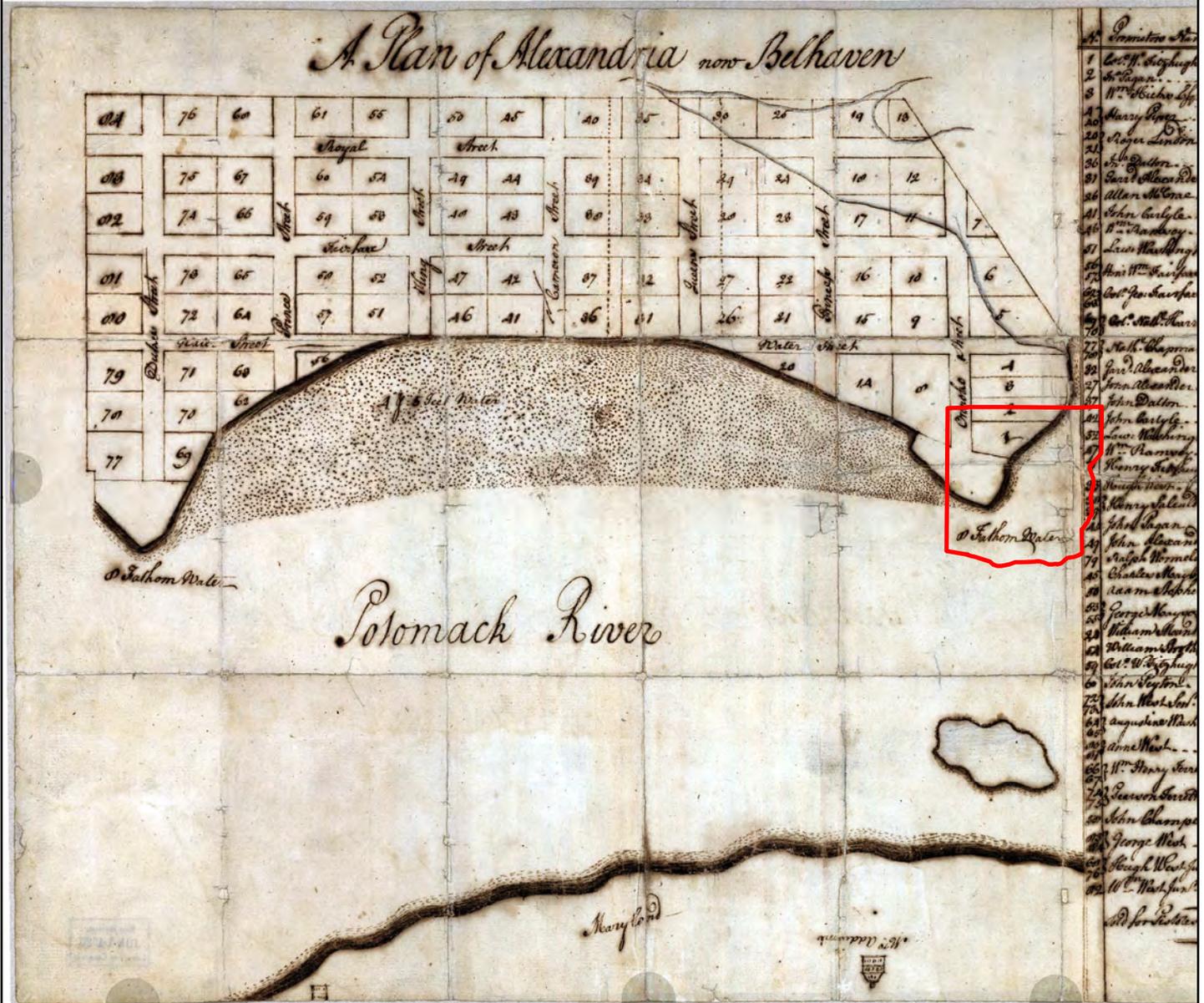
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PROPERTY HISTORY

The town of Alexandria began circa 1732 as a tobacco trading post on Hugh West's land on the upper side of Great Hunting Creek. Located on what is now Oronoco Street and known as Hugh West's Hunting Creek Warehouse, this area included a tobacco inspection station as well as tobacco warehouses (Smith and Miller 1989:14). The warehouses were built by three Scottish factors (a factor was, in essence, a middleman between the farmers and the merchants) for the purpose of holding tobacco prior to shipment to England. As central points in the tobacco trade, the warehouses were the location where the ships docked and where deals were struck (Harrison 1987: 405). In the 1730s and 1740s, because of the presence of the tobacco warehouses and inspection station, the area was already a focal point for commerce, making it a good location for a town. At this time, the town consisted of "a scattering of wooden structures, a house, a tavern, or "ordinary", and two large tobacco warehouses" (Shephard 2006:1).

In anticipation of the development of Alexandria as a town site, George Washington surveyed the lands north of Hunting Creek circa 1749; this map shows the town lots bounded by Duke, Royal and Oronoko Streets stretching between two points of land on either side of a crescent shaped bay on the west bank of the Potomac (Exhibit 2). The banks of the bay rose abruptly above the tidal flats along the river, perhaps as much as 15-20 feet. The southernmost point was named Point Lumley, after a ship captain who moored offshore in this location. The northern point later became known as "West's Point" and was the location of one of the first tobacco inspection stations that was established by an Act of the Virginia Assembly in 1730. The Robinson Terminal North property is located at the foot of Oronoco Street on the edge of the original "West's Point", but lies primarily on land artificially created in 1788.

The act for erecting the town at "Hunting Creek Warehouse" on 60 acres of land owned by Phillip Alexander, Jr., John Alexander and Hugh West" was passed on 11 May 1749. According to the act establishing the town, it would both benefit trade and navigation and be to the advantage of the "frontier inhabitants." The 60 acres of land were directed to be laid out by the surveyor to the first branch above the warehouses and extend down the meanders of the Potomac to Middle Point (Jones Point). The lots of the town were directed to be laid out along streets "not exceeding half an acre of ground in each lot setting apart portions of land for a market place and public landing, to be sold by public sale or auction, the proceeds of which were to be paid to Philip Alexander, John Alexander and Hugh West." Purchasers of each lot were required to erect one house of brick, stone, or wood, "well framed," with a brick or stone chimney, in the dimensions of 20 feet square, "or proportionably thereto" if the purchaser had two contiguous lots (Winfrey 1971:443-446). The streets were laid in a grid pattern which was subdivided into blocks with four half-acre lots to a block (Cressey et al. 1982:150).



 Approximate Location of Project Area

Map Source: Washington, George. "A plan of Alexandria, now Belhaven." 1749. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C. 20540-4650 USA dcu. Call Number G3884.A3G46 1749 .W3. Digital Id: g3884a.ct000223 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/gmd/g3884a.ct000223>

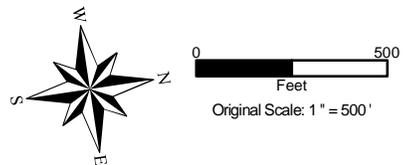


Exhibit 2 A Plan of Alexandria, Now Belhaven - George Washington, 1749

Robinson North Terminal - Due Dilligence Investigation - Archeological Assessment

WSSI # 21619.02 - October 2013



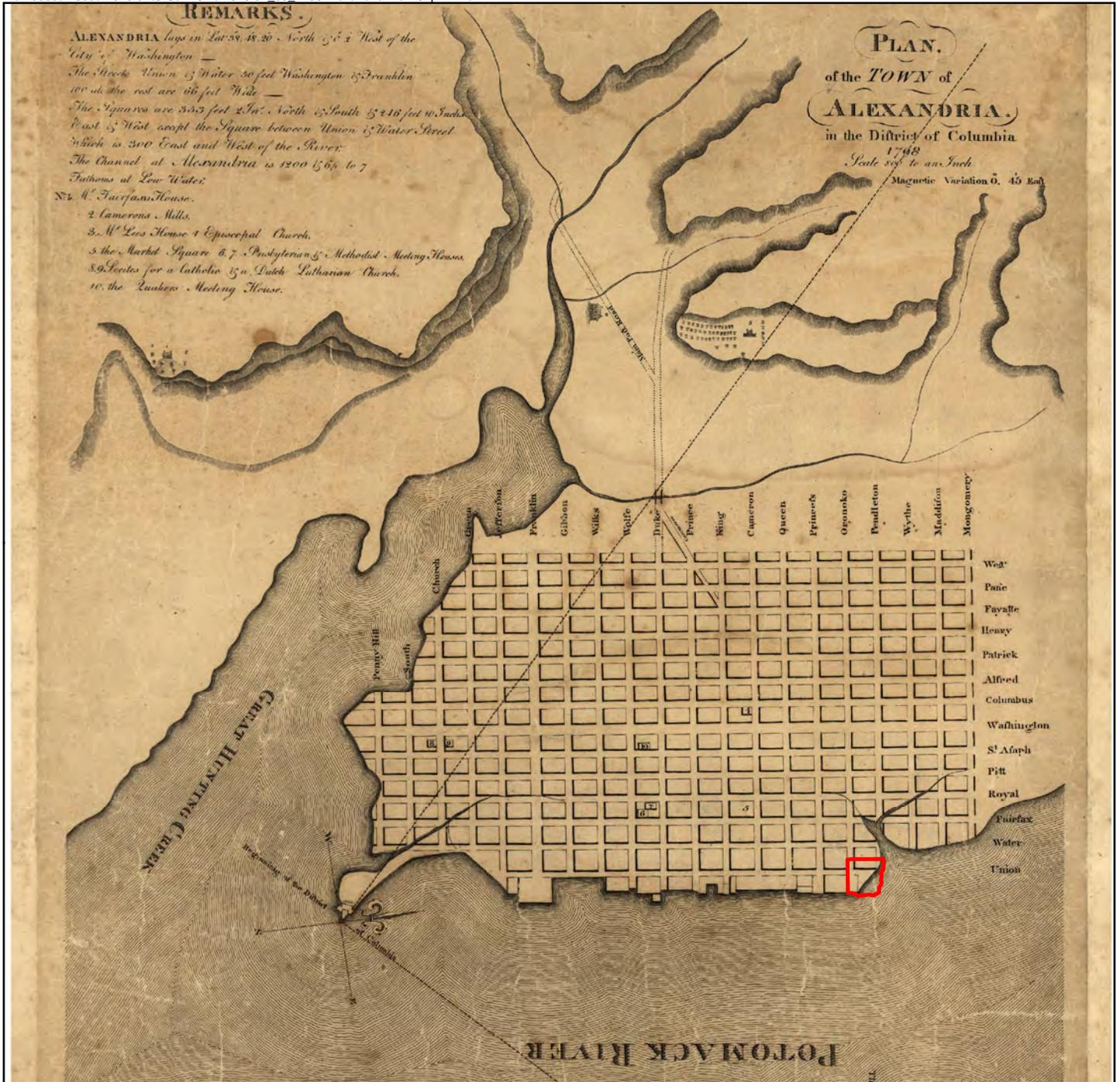
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Captain Richard Conway was one of several wealthy landholders who owned various tracts of land on the outskirts of Alexandria in the late 18th century. Conway was both an army captain during the Revolution and the captain of a merchant vessel, the “Friendship.” Situated off Oronoco and Union Streets in the vicinity of the study area was his main residence, named Beverly. In addition to the dwelling, the estate included a smokehouse, lumber house, stone cellar, and a brick stable. Having married into the prominent West family, an aristocratic landholding family that settled Alexandria, Conway secured his status. In 1783, Conway was elected mayor of Alexandria and at that time was also a stock holder in local banks, the Marine Insurance Company, and the Alexandria Theatre. As a member of the upper class, Conway was one of eleven Town Trustees who formed a small oligarchic group controlling the commercial affairs of Alexandria. Conway died in 1806 and his extensive land holdings were sold over the course of the ensuing years (Miller 1991:78).

In 1779, the town of Alexandria was incorporated, which allowed it to have its own local government, as opposed to being governed by the laws of the county. Nevertheless, the Fairfax County Courthouse remained in Alexandria (Smith and Miller 1989:51). In 1791, Alexandria was ceded to the federal government to become part of the newly established District of Columbia, and was referred to as Alexandria County of the District of Columbia (Rose 1976:7). Although Alexandria officially became part of the District of Columbia on February 27, 1801, it continued to govern itself (Smith and Miller 1989:51); The Fairfax County Courthouse, however, remained in Alexandria until 1799 when a new site for the courthouse was selected in its current location, now within the City of Fairfax.

The 1798 Plan of the Town of Alexandria by George Gilpin shows the study area at the foot of Oronoko Street near the mouth of Great Hunting Creek (Exhibit 3).

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the economy of Alexandria was dependent upon its function as a port city (Cressey et al. 1982:150). As a center of export for the farms of Northern Virginia, the town prospered. During the 1790s, due in part to turmoil in Europe associated with the French Revolution and the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars; Alexandria became a major port for the exportation of American wheat. In 1791, the total value of the town’s exports was \$381,000 and four years later it had grown to \$948,000 (MacKay 1995:55). By 1795, the City of Alexandria had closed its tobacco warehouses, as wheat supplanted tobacco as the main crop coming into the town. By 1800, Alexandria was fourth behind Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York in wheat exports.



 Approximate Location of Project Area

Map Source: Gilpin, George. "Plan of the town of Alexandria in the District of Columbia, 1798." 1798. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C. 20540-4650 USA dcu.
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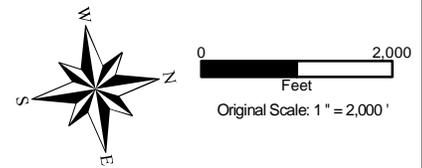


Exhibit 3 Plan of the Town of Alexandria in the District of Columbia, George Gilpin 1798

Robinson Terminal North - Due Dilligence Investigation - Archeological Assessment

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Construction of the Alexandria Canal, which connected the city to the C & O Canal at Georgetown, began on July 4, 1831 under the direction of Captain William Turnbull of the U.S. Army Topographical Engineers, who was assisted by Lieutenant Maskell C. Ewing. The canal traversed the Potomac River from Georgetown via a stone and timber aqueduct and ran level for approximately seven miles to terminate at a wide basin at the foot of Montgomery Street, only a short distance to the north of West's Point and the study area. A series of locks completed in 1845 connected the canal basin to wharfs along the Potomac River, enabling timber, coal, and agricultural products from the interior direct access to Alexandria's shipping. The completion of the canal opened Alexandria to all the markets accessible from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal which ran westward 185 miles to Cumberland, Maryland.

Maskell C. Ewing's 1845 map of Alexandria shows the "Fish Wharf" at the foot of Oronoco Street; the wharf extended the original shoreline at West's Point into the Potomac River (Exhibit 4). New land now covered the majority of the southern third of the study area.

With the completion of the canal and the close proximity of the study area to the entrance, the study area became an ideal location to stockpile coal for shipment. In 1859, the American Coal Company leased the wharf at West's Point from the Corporation of Alexandria (Miller 1988: 24). The lot "bounded by Oronoco, Union and Pendleton streets, and fronting the Potomac River" was leased for a ten year period with an annual rent of \$2,100, and with the option to renew for an additional ten years at the increased rent of \$2,800. The American Coal Company expanded and improved the wharves during their first decade of the lease (AG 3 November 1869:3); however, no expansion is apparent on the 1864 Plan of Alexandria (which is based on the earlier 1845 map). Two large warehouses are shown at the foot of Oronoco Street within the study area; two smaller buildings were located near the intersection of Union with Oronoco Streets (Exhibit 5). Four buildings are also shown within the study area on the north side of Union Street.

By 1877, significant improvements to the study area had been made; the Hopkins map from that year shows that a large wharf within the study area (Exhibit 6). Although no structures are shown on the wharf, an ice house and two unidentified buildings are shown along the southern study area boundary on Oronoco Street, which apparently was not open at that time. A large stable and two small buildings are also shown of the corner of Union and Oronoco Streets, although they don't appear to be in the same configuration as the earlier 1864 buildings. The small buildings were likely offices and other buildings associated with the American Coal Company yard, while the stables likely housed horses and mules for the yard's coal hauling and loading needs.



 Approximate Location of Project Area

Map Source: "Plan of the Town of Alexandria, D.C. with the Environs Exhibiting the outlet of the Alexandria Canal, the Shipping Channel, wharves, Hunting Cr., etc.," Maskell C. Ewing, 1845. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington D.C.

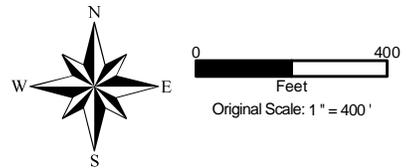
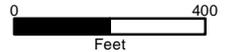
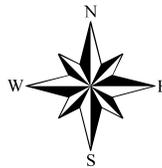


Exhibit 4 1845 Ewing Map of Alexandria, VA



 Approximate Location of Project Area

Map Source: Image from NOAA's Office of Coast Survey Historical Map & Chart Collection: <http://historicalcharts.noaa.gov>



Original Scale: 1" = 400'

Exhibit 5 1864 Plan of Alexandria, Virginia

The majority of the study area is shown as open space on the Hopkins map, but it would have been anything but empty. Civil War era photographs and descriptions of the bustling scene at the city's coal wharves to the north of the study area give an idea of the activity within our study area. An article in the local newspaper in 1860 related:

Below, close to the wharf, lies a canal boat, while immediately outside the boat is moored a sea-going vessel. A tackle arranged either on the wharf, or in the riggin [sic] of the vessel, affords a "purchase" for the heavy iron buckets which convey the coal from the boat to the vessel, whilst a horse, driven to and fro upon the wharf, gives the power which hoists and lowers the buckets. The coal heavers are divided into "gangs" of nine persons each: a driver, who attends to the horse, a "guysman" who adjusts the tackle and gives the order to hoist or lower, a "hooker-on," who hooks on the buckets when filled; two "dumpers" who empty the coal into the hole of the vessel, and four "fillers" who labor with shovels in filling the empty buckets. To each loading vessel there are two "gangs," one employed at each hatchway so that hundreds of tons of coal speedily change places, under these buys hands, from the boat to the vessel...This is repeated at every vessel, and there is sometimes forty loading at once [Alexandria Gazette (AG) 8 October 1860:3]

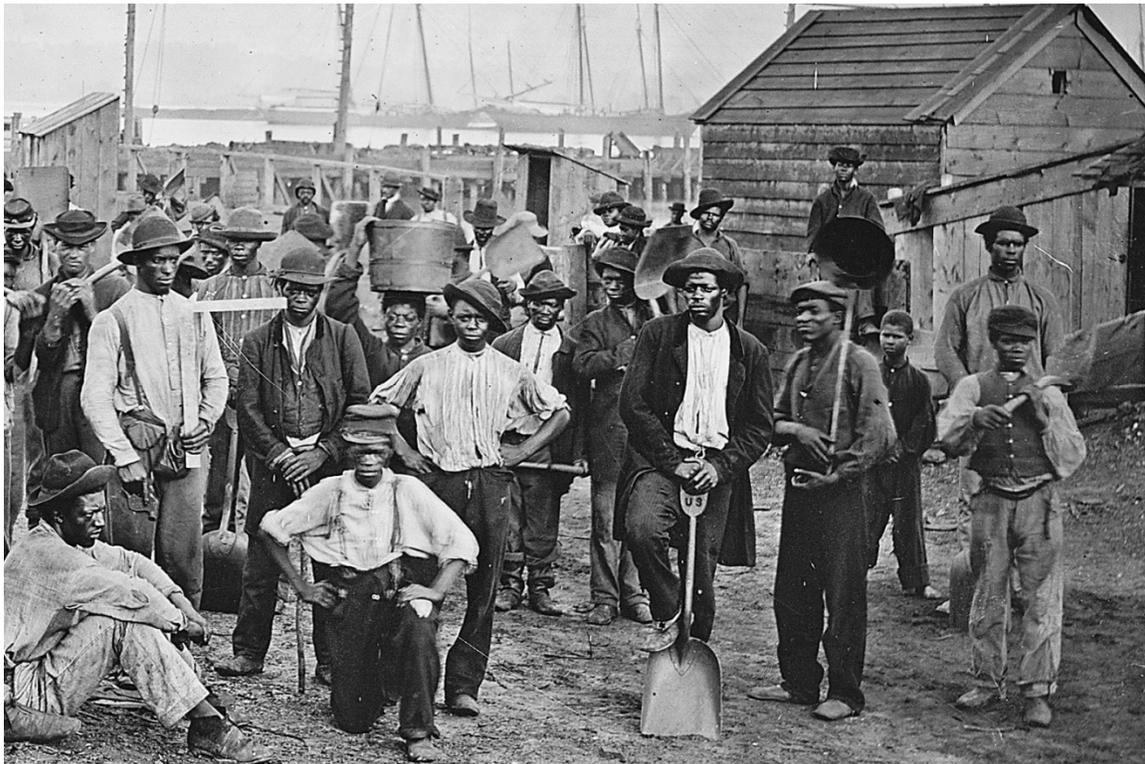


Exhibit 7: "Negro laborers at Alexandria, near coal wharf, ca. 1860 - ca. 1865"

Source: National Archives - <http://research.archives.gov/description/524820>

The American Coal Company wharf would have housed a massive volume of coal awaiting shipment, similar to the view in a photo of the Cumberland Iron and Coal Company coal yard at the terminus of Montgomery Street (Exhibit 8).

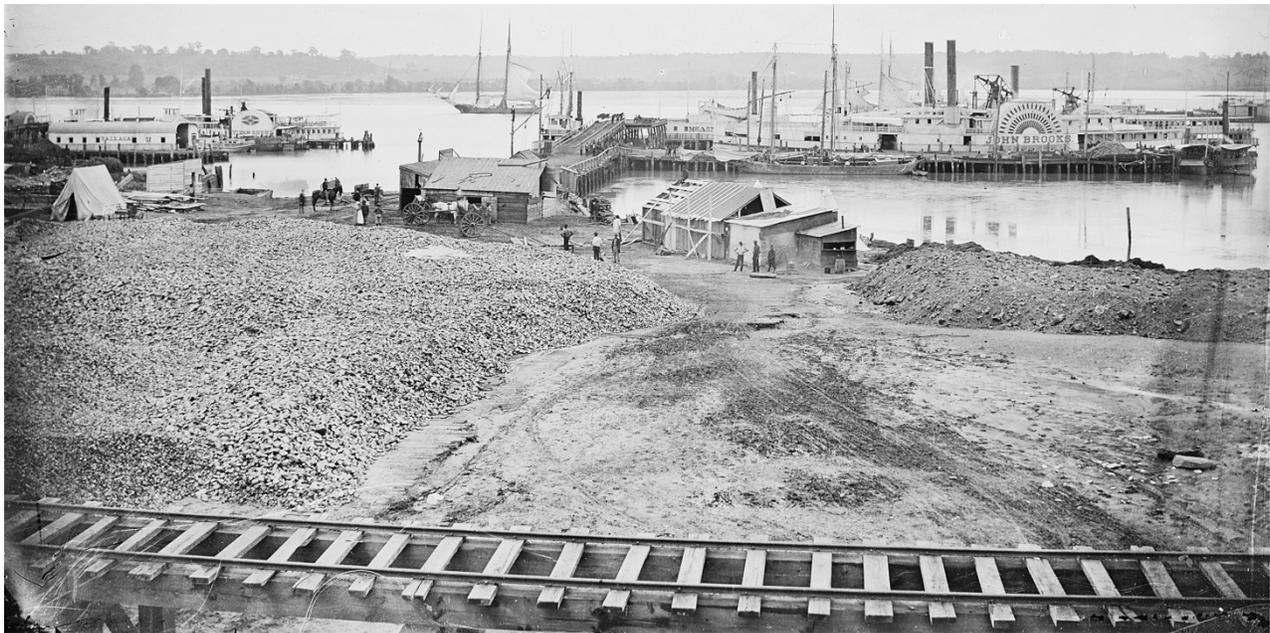
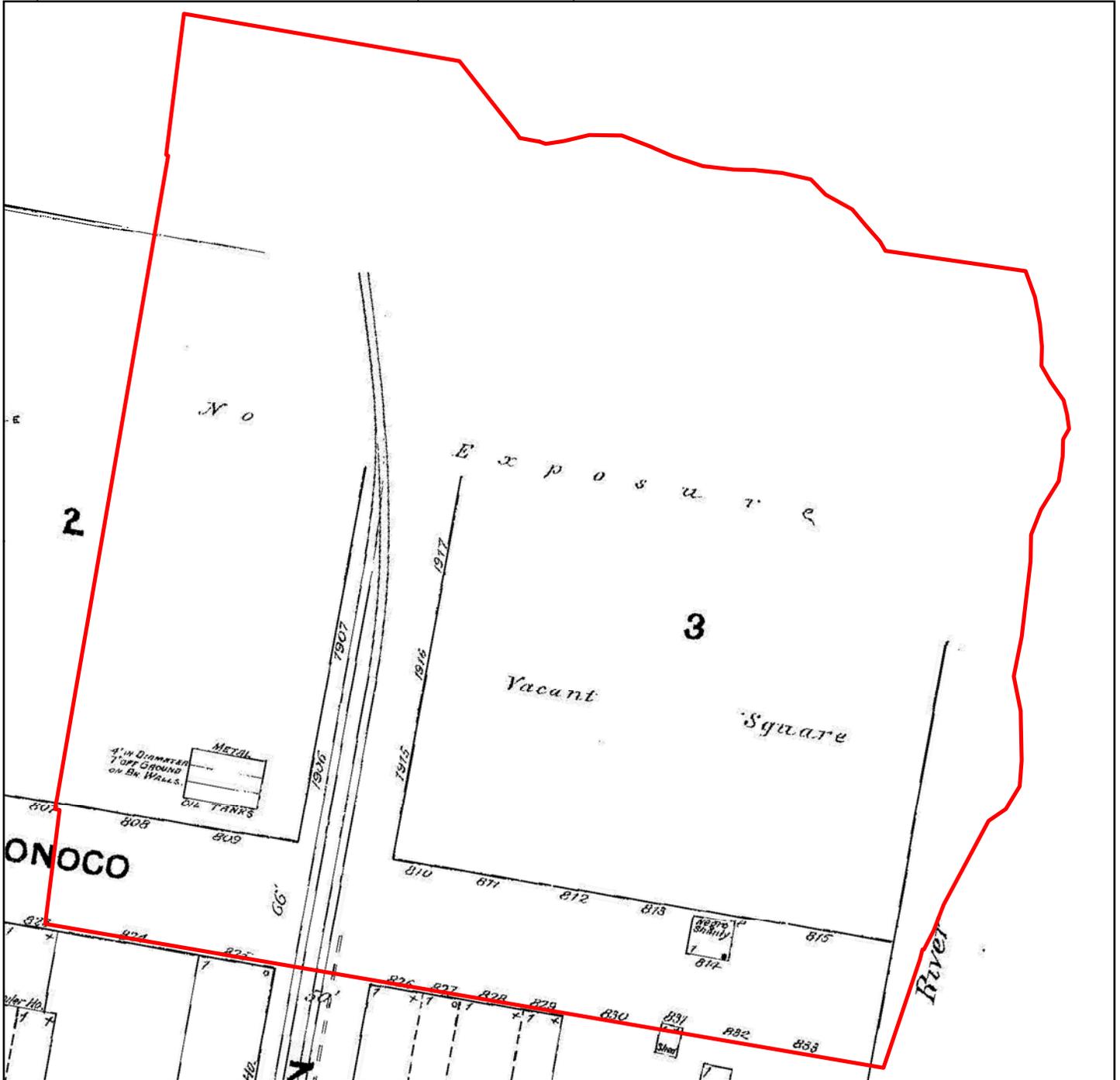


Exhibit 8: "Transport fleet on coal wharf, ca. 1860 - ca. 1865"

Source: National Archives - <http://research.archives.gov/description/530055>

By the time of the Civil War, the American Coal Company and the Cumberland Iron and Coal Company, handled nearly half of the 37,000 tons of coal shipped monthly from Alexandria's port (Hurst 1991: 5). The booming coal trade continued until the Alexandria Canal closed in 1887. The American Coal Company ceased operations within the study area in that same year after reaching an agreement with the Alexandria City Council to offer \$3,500 in compensation for the termination of its lease of the public wharf (Miller 1988: 24; Evening Star [ES] 26 January 1887: 4).

Two years later, a flood washed away much of the earth fill of the American Coal Company wharf, causing significant damage and necessitating expensive repairs (AG 3 June 1889: 3). Damage was also reported up and down the entire Alexandria waterfront Georgetown, and the District. The wharf within the study area, "bounded by Oronoco, Pendleton, Union and the river, known as the American Coal Wharf" and the adjacent Corporation Fish Wharf were advertised for lease by the City of Alexandria in 1890 (AG 26 February 1890: 3). The 1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows the majority of the study area as vacant, with above ground "metal oil tanks" in the southwest corner and a "negro shanty" at 814 Oronoco Street in the southeast corner (Exhibit 9). By 1896, western portion of the study area (west of Union Street) was occupied by Standard Oil; the Sanborn map shows the tanks in a different location, but the Oronoco Street dwelling in the southeastern corner of the study area persisted (Exhibit 10).



 Approximate Location of Project Area

Map Source: "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Alexandria, Independent Cities, Virginia." Sanborn Map Company, July 1891. Sheet 15. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington D.C.

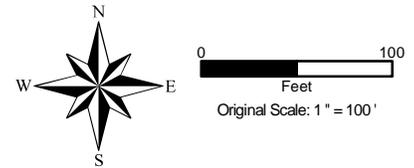
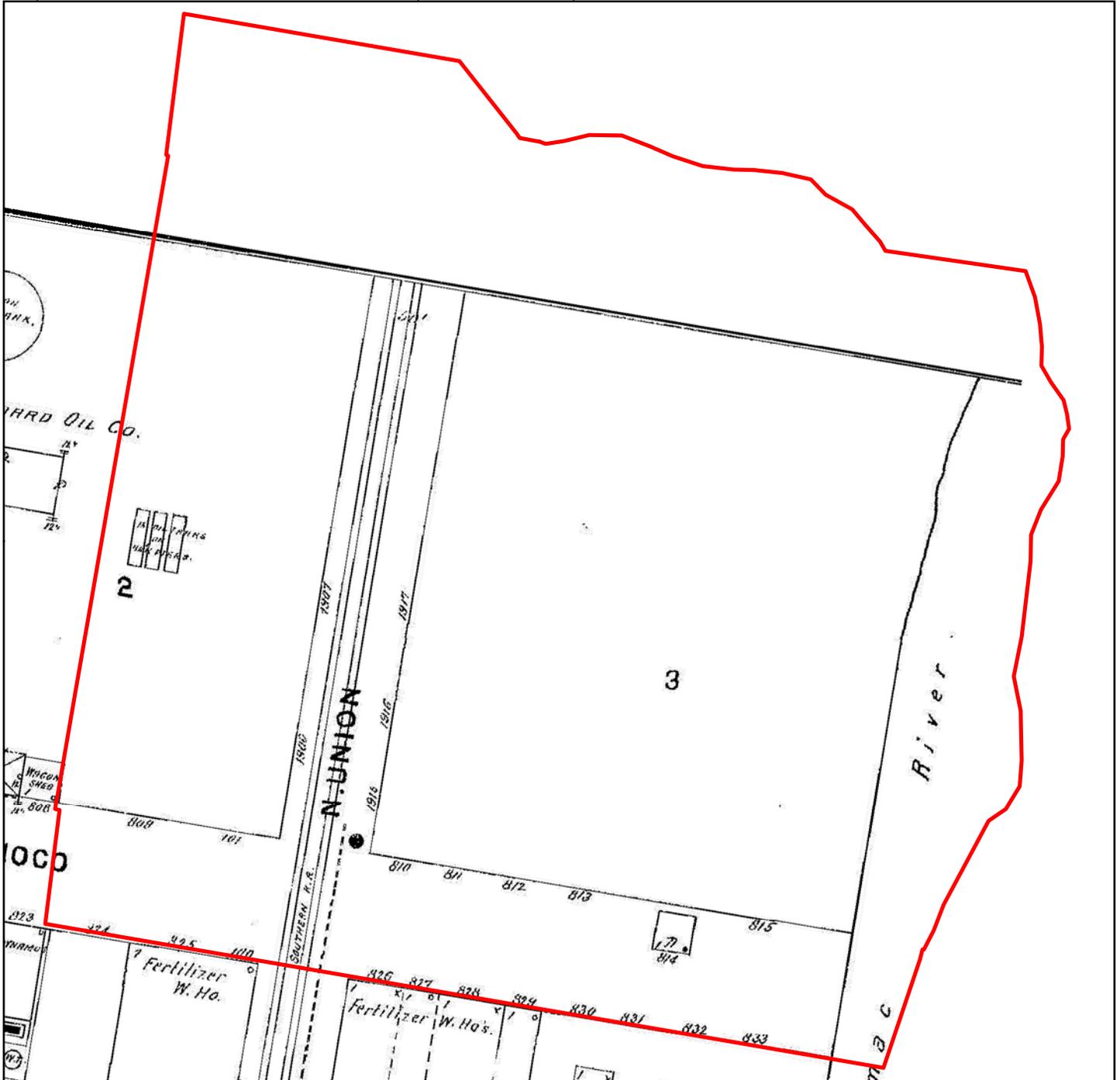


Exhibit -
.....% - %Sanborn Map

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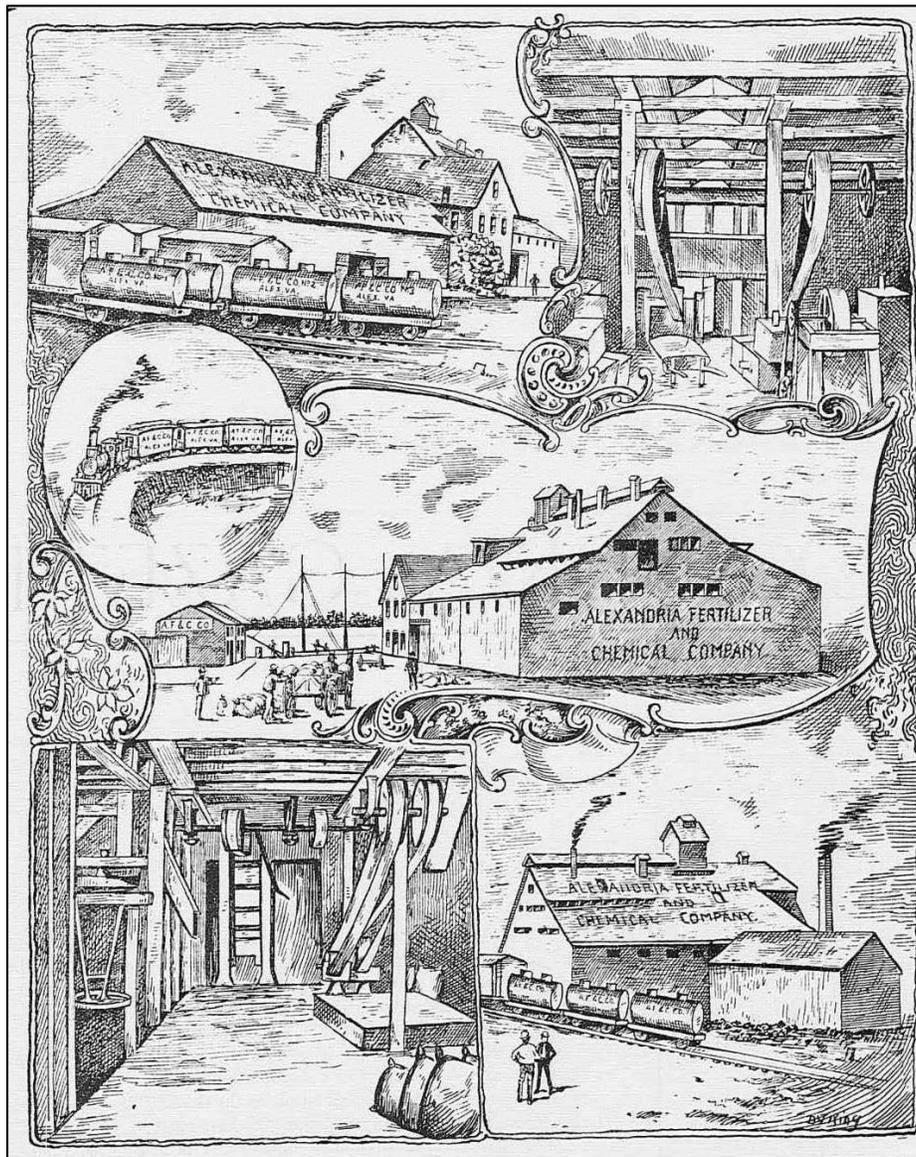
 Approximate Location of Project Area

Map Source: "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Alexandria, Independent Cities, Virginia." Sanborn Map Company, 1896. Sheet 16. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington D.C.



Exhibit 10 1896 Sanborn Map

In 1895, the city leased the American Coal Wharf to the Alexandria Fertilizer and Chemical Company, whom intended to construct an acid plant at this location (Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser [AGVA] 27 February 1895:2). The company was established in 1889 and produced fertilizers and "Blue Windsor ground plaster." The main factory complex operated on the south side of Princess Street between Union and Lee Streets, conveniently located along the railroad and with access to the Potomac. A large storage building sprawled along Union Street on the north of Princess Street, adjacent to the city gas works. The company advertised that the river was 20 feet deep at their wharf, which could accommodate five ships at any given time, and that they owned their own track and railroad cars that held sulfuric acid (AGVA 16 September 1893:18).



**Exhibit 11: Alexandria Fertilizer and Chemical Company
Princess Street between Union and Lee (Source: AGVA 16 September 1893:18)**

By 1902, the acid plant had been constructed; the 1907 map shows the factory itself was a sizeable structure containing storage for ores and other raw materials, furnaces, engines, boilers, exhaust towers and a large room for acid chambers; a smaller separate building housed offices and a laboratory (Exhibit 12). A slip on the Potomac and a private spur of the rail line on Union Street provided access for the transportation of raw materials and finished product to and from the plant. The map also shows that the northeastern projecting wharf shown in Hopkins' 1877 was not maintained after the 1889 flood damage and subsequent repairs; a narrow, probably wooden, landing is shown in place of the earlier wharf.

Successive Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show frequent remodeling and expansion of the acid works through the early 20th century in the study area. In 1912, the boilers indicated on earlier maps have been replaced with larger versions in a separate building (Exhibit 13). The 1921 map indicates that the office and laboratory building has been moved a short distance to the east onto a new extension of the shoreline (Exhibit 14); however, this extension is not present on the 1941 map and may be a mapping error (Exhibit 15). The 1941 and 1959 maps identify the plant as operated by the American Agricultural Chemical Company¹.

A review of historic aerial imagery shows that the American Agricultural Chemical Company sulfuric acid factory was demolished in 1963 and in 1964 the western portion of the warehouse that currently stands east of Union Street was constructed. The remainder of the warehouse was completed by 1968. The warehouses standing to the west of Union Street were constructed in 1978, according to a USGS map and Alexandria tax records.

¹ The American Agricultural Chemical Company was formed in 1899 under a charter from Connecticut and was a conglomerate of over 20 companies, including the Alexandria Fertilizer and Chemical Company (AG 26 May 1899:3).

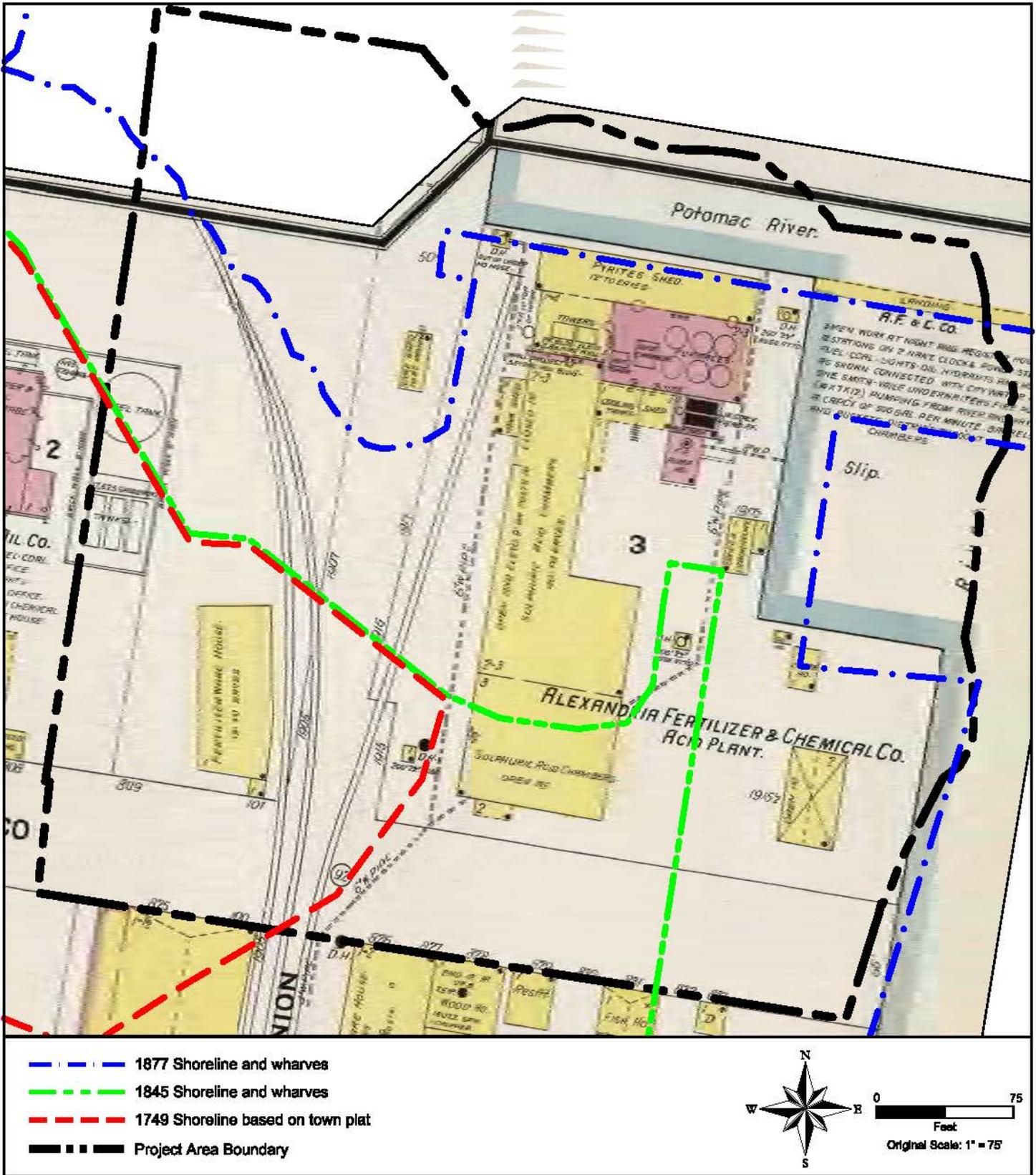
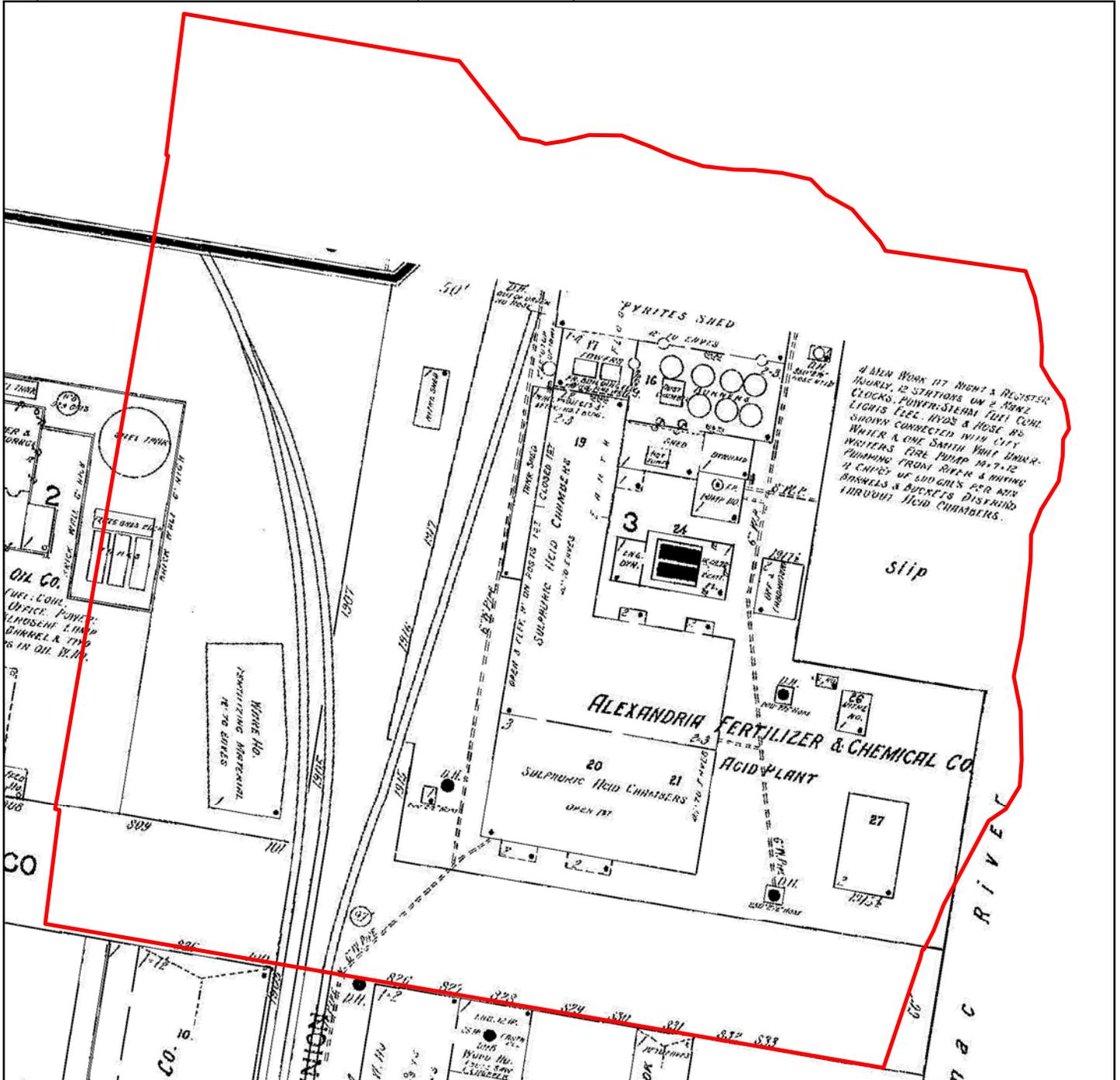


Exhibit 12
1907 Sanborn Map



 Approximate Location of Project Area

Map Source: "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Alexandria, Independent Cities, Virginia." Sanborn Map Company, November 1912. Sheet 4. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington D.C.

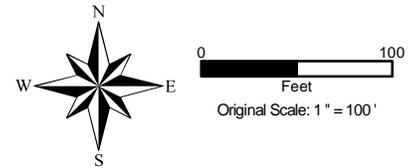
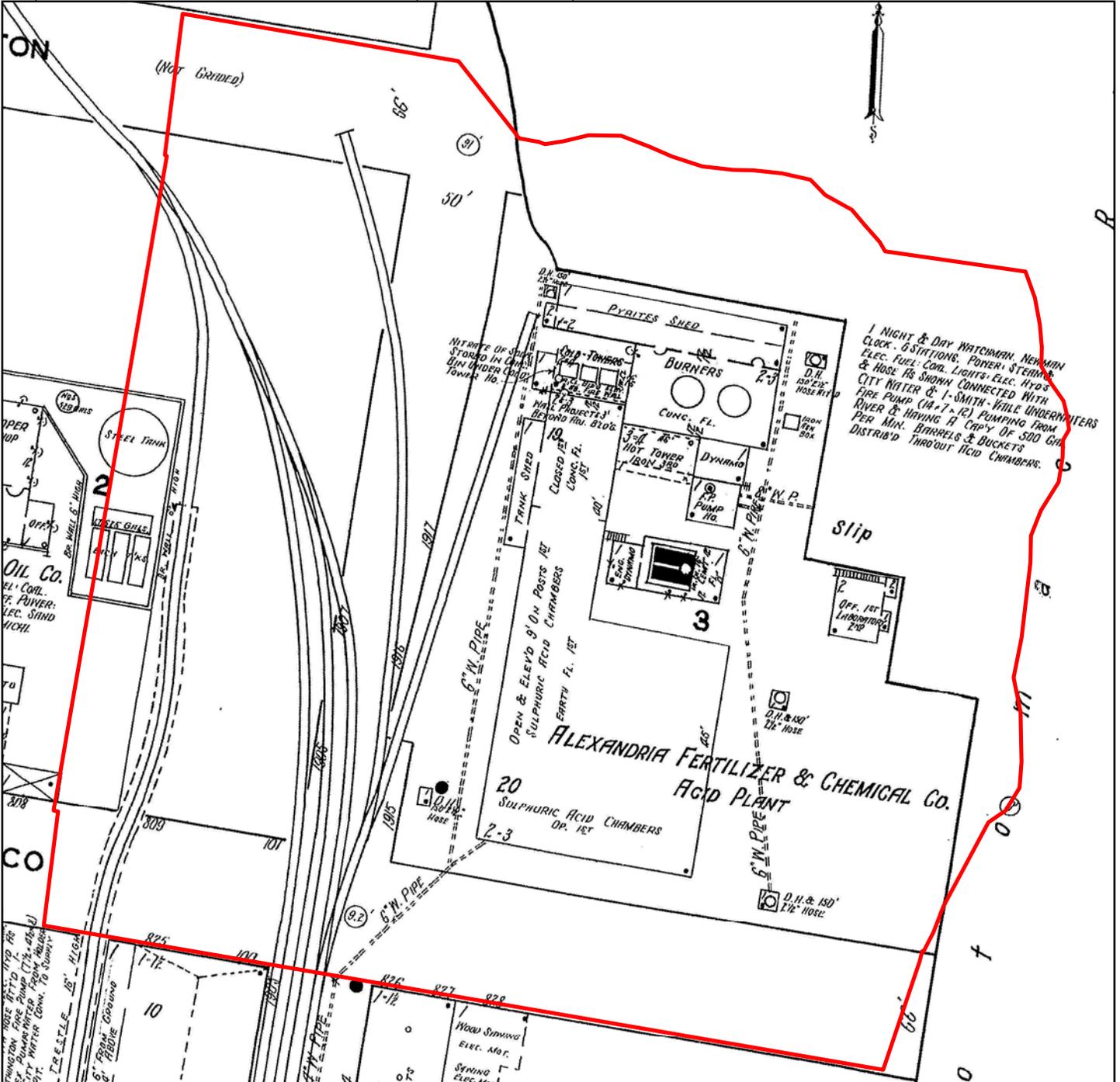


Exhibit 13 1912 Sanborn Map





Approximate Location of Project Area

Map Source: "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Alexandria, Independent Cities, Virginia." Sanborn Map Company, August 1921. Sheet 20. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington D.C.

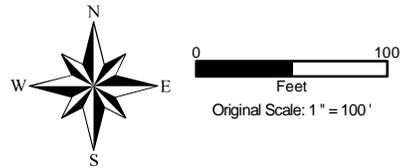


Exhibit 14 1921 Sanborn Map

PREVIOUS ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Few documents exist that describe the construction techniques used to infill the Alexandria harbor in the 18th and 19th century; therefore, the archeological record becomes even more important in complementing the documentary record. At least four wharves have been documented along the Alexandria waterfront (Table 1).

Table 1: Archeological Wharf Excavations in Alexandria, Virginia

Name	Date	Construction Type and Fill
1. Carlyle-Dalton wharf	1759	Crib with cobbles and gravel
2. Lee Street	Ca. 1780	Bulkhead
3. Roberdeau's wharf	1785	Pier and Bulkhead with earthen fill
4. Keith's Wharf	1785	Bulkhead with earthen fill

During construction of the Torpedo Factory condominiums in 1982, four sections of the Carlyle-Dalton wharf were uncovered by archeologists along Cameron Street (Heintzelman- Muego 1983). The crib wharf was constructed of yellow pine, some with bark still attached. A second wharf was discovered on the block bounded by Lee, Queen, Union and Cameron streets (Shephard 2006:10). Artifacts were recovered from the fill during the excavations, however could not be used to date the stone paved wharf.

Excavations in 1989 for the Harborside Development exposed the surface of Roberdeau's wharf at the end of Wolfe Street. Much of the surface appeared to be covered with wooden planks, while other portions were covered with a mixture of wood, sawdust, pine tar and sand. The wharf was constructed of timber bulkheads with piled supports.

Finally, the archeological investigations conducted prior to the development of the Ford's Landing site (at the base of Franklin Street) revealed the most information to date. They identified the well preserved and intact remains of Keith's Wharf bulkhead, along with "a 350 foot-long shipway, nine derelict vessel hulls, [and] a marine railway". The archeologists at Ford's Landing expected Keith's Wharf to be of cob/crib construction, but found a bulkhead wharf measuring 400 by 500 feet (Engineering Science 1993). Because the bay was shallow and located away from the fast flowing Potomac River channel, a cob/crib structure containing vast quantities of earthen fill had not been necessary. The archeologists also theorized that this method may have been an expedient and inexpensive investment for a speculative venture.

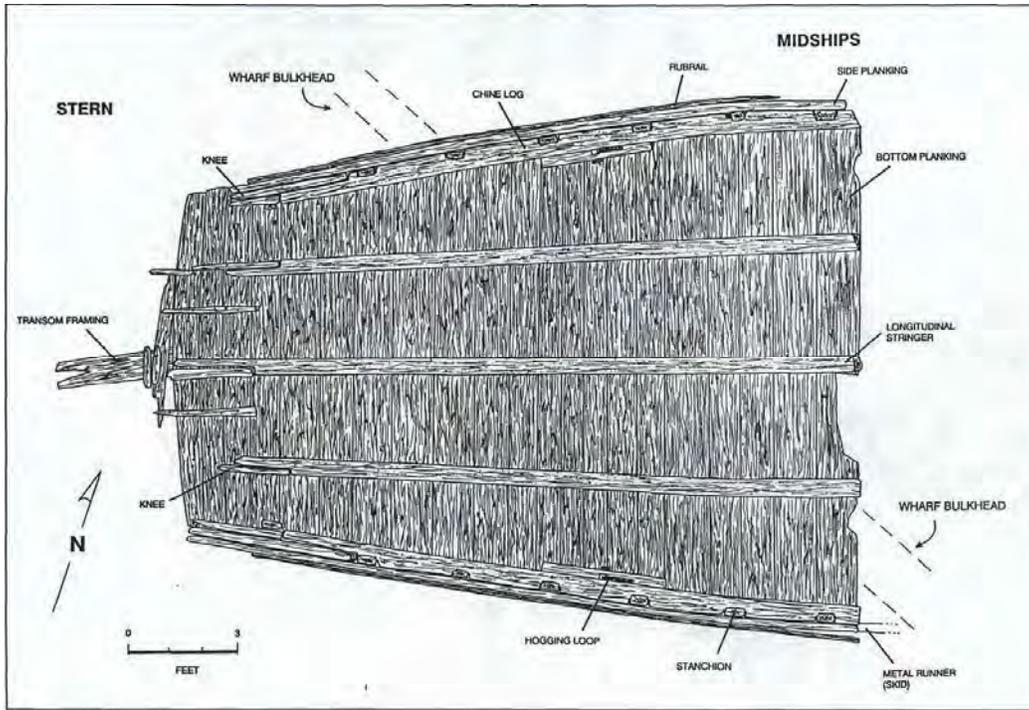
The remains of Keith's Wharf were found 6-13 feet below the modern surface. The 18th century wharf timber measured 10-17 inches in diameter and were connected by "half-lap scarf joints reinforced with iron dowels or drift pins." Tie back braces were dovetailed and pinned to the bulkhead, extended up to 30 feet into the fill and were anchored in such a manner that the fill would not "push out" on the bulkhead. Images of the bulkhead construction and of a scuttled scow are shown below (Exhibits 16-18).



**Exhibit 16: Keith's Wharf Bulkhead and Tie-Back Braces
(Engineering Science 1993)**



**Exhibit 17: Bulkhead Repairs Overlying a Barge
(Engineering Science 1993)**



**Exhibit 18: Plan View and Photo of Feature 27
A scow, or flat bottomed vessel (Engineering Science 1993)**

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Based on the archival research and previous archeological research presented above, the following resources were present or are currently located within the project area; an assessment of their potential archaeological signature is also addressed below.

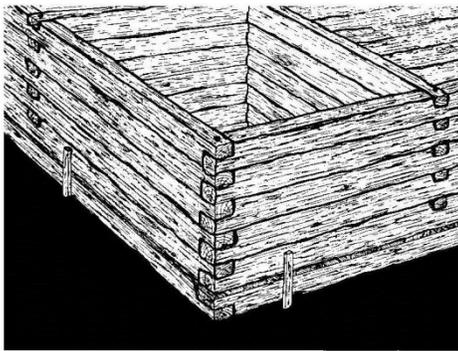
18th Century Dwellings and Warehouses

- 1732 – First tobacco warehouse constructed by Hugh West
- 1754/1755 – Wharf constructed at West's Point for British troops
- 1764 – Additions to Public Wharf at West's Point by Thomas Fleming
- 1770/1771 – Second warehouse constructed at West's Point
- 1783 – Captain Richard Conway's mansion constructed on north side of Oronoco Street (destroyed by fire in 1856)
- 1787 – Two houses located on the wharf, one with a stable

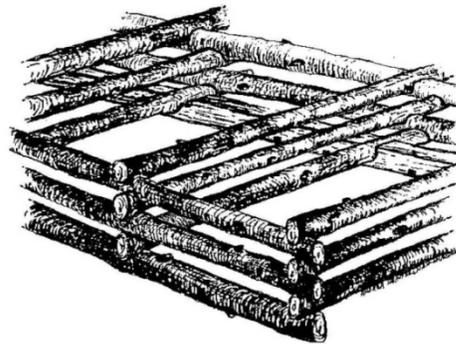
With the exception of Conway's mansion that stood for nearly 75 years and probably had a substantial foundation, the earliest dwellings and warehouses located along West Point likely had a minimal archeological signature. Evidence of the earliest wharf construction (circa 1754-1764), however, may be evident in the archeological record.

Wharf Construction

Several techniques were at the disposal of the residents of Alexandria to construct wharves and extend new land out into the river. Four general types of retaining structures used in wharf construction are recognized: grillage²; cob/crib; bulkhead; and piling (Engineering Science 1993: 97). Based on the archival research and previous archeological investigations in Alexandria, the latter three wharf construction techniques are expected to have been used at the Robinson North terminal.



Crib Wharf Structure (Alexandria Archaeology)



Cobb Wharf Structure (Heintzelman-Muego 1983)

² Grillage wharfs consisted of rafts of logs layered alternately and weighed with stones - only two wharves of this type have been found in the archeological record (Engineering Science 1993: 97)

1. Cob or Crib Wharf Construction – consists of stacking timbers to form a square framework that sank to the bottom of the water when filled with stone or soil. The crib technique used tightly packed timbers or planks that were notched in the corners and often pinned with wooden spikes or "trunnels". Cob frameworks were more loosely constructed with gaps and therefore filled with stone (the name may have derived from cobblestones). A wharf measuring 25 feet wide may have been constructed of only one crib. This type of construction was likely used in the late 18th/early 19th century to extend the land at West Point within the study area.

2. Bulkhead Construction – consisted of "stacking and interlocking long timbers" to form a three sided structure. The walls were often braced with struts, or back braces, "that attached to the wall and projected back into the wharf fill". Pilings may have been added at a later time to support the bulkhead walls.

3. Piles Wharves – are a type of bulkhead wharf that used a pile driver to set logs vertically into the river bottom. Early pile drivers consisted of a heavy weight attached to ropes that would be lifted by teams of workers and dropped on the pile (Shephard 2006:6). This method became more common in the later 19th century with the advent of steam powered pile drivers.

The Fish Wharf, located adjacent to the study area, was reconstructed or repaired in 1852 using over 150 piles that ranged in length between 25 and 45 feet (AG 22 July 1852:2). The flooring may have also been constructed of pine or gum wood (Exhibit 19).

The remains of 18th and 19th century crib and/or bulkhead/ pile wharf construction are likely preserved beneath the Robinson North Terminal. It is possible that boats may be located that had been scuttled to become part of the fill. The American Coal Company wharf was also partially destroyed in 1889 during a flood episode; therefore the early 20th century repairs should be evident.

WHARF TIMBER WANTED.—Sealed Proposals, addressed to the undersigned, will be received at the Auditor's Office, in the town of Alexandria, until 12 o'clock, on Monday, 9th day of August next, for furnishing the following wharf timber, to be delivered in this place, on the "Fish Wharf;" the delivery to commence as soon as possible, beginning with the piling, and to be completed within thirty days, after the offer shall be accepted:—

50 White Oak Piles, 45 feet long, 12x12 inches at the butt end, and to square the same size 16 feet; to be straight and free from wind shakes, and not less than 8 inches at the small end.

35 White Oak Piles, 35 feet long, 12x12 at the butt, and to square the same size 16 feet, to be straight and free from wind shakes, and not less than 8 inches at the small end.

36 Do. do. 30 feet long, 12x12 at the butt, and to square the same size 16 feet, to be straight and free from wind shakes and not less than eight inches at the small end.

40 Do. do. 25 feet long, 12x12 at the butt, and to square the same size 16 feet; to be straight and free from wind shakes and not less than eight inches at the small end.

800 Do. do. backing timber, in the rough

18,000 feet Yellow Pine Capping, 12x13 inches, from 30 to 40 feet long

6,418 lineal measure, 12x6 inches, Pine or Gum flooring

24,000 feet White Oak Wharf timber logs 12x10 inches

60 White Oak Ties, 22 feet long

35 Do. do. do., 18 feet long

25 Do. do. do., 12 feet long.

The Pine Capping must be free of sap, and in all other respects of the best quality; and such also must be the quality of the White Oak Wharf Logs.

Persons making offers, will state at how much per foot lineal measure for the Piles and Ties, and Pine or Gum flooring, and how much per foot, board measure, for the Wharf Timber. By order of Real Estate Committee:—

WM. N. MILLS, Sup. Police.

July 22—Jtd

Exhibit 19: 1852 Advertisement for Fish Wharf Timber

19th Century Buildings

The 1864 Plan of Alexandria shows four buildings on the north side of Union Street. Although they have not been identified at this time, they were likely small tenements. Two large warehouses are shown at the foot of Oronoco Street within the study area and two smaller buildings were located near the intersection of Union and Oronoco Streets. By 1877 the study area included an ice house, four unidentified buildings and a stable. Again, the subsurface remains of these buildings, if any, have not likely survived in the archeological record on the surface of the wharf. However, several buildings, including the ice house, were situated within the middle of Oronoco Street. It is possible that foundations of these buildings may be located during archeological investigations.

Circa 1896- 1963 - Sulfuric Acid Plant

The Alexandria Fertilizer and Chemical Company acid plant utilized the entire wharf. The majority of the buildings were of frame construction and the main building with the sulfuric acid chambers had an earthen floor. The furnace room, boiler room and pump house were constructed of brick with concrete floors; evidence of these structures may likely be evident in the archeological record.

1964-Present - Robinson Terminal Buildings

The building located on the western side of North Union Street was constructed in 1976 and consists of 36,193 square feet of warehouse space. The eastern buildings located at 501 North Union Street contain 55,621 square feet of space and were constructed in 1968.

KNOWN DISTURBANCES

The property is currently the location of two Robinson North Terminal Warehouses, which have stood at the site since 1964/1976 (Exhibit 20). The buildings rest on a one-foot thick concrete slab foundation. The current development plans for the property include mixed-use buildings with underground parking garages.

Six soil borings were excavated during a Preliminary Subsurface Exploration and Geotechnical Engineering Analysis conducted in 2008 (ECS 2008; Exhibit 21). Typically, between 12 and 15 feet of fill soil was detected in the soil borings, which generally included brick fragments; in the case of B-5, wood fragments were also noted which might represent debris from demolished buildings, scuttled boats or ships, or wooden cribs from the construction of the historic wharf. B-2 differed significantly from the other five borings, containing only four feet of fill soil that included quartz and organic material. The shallow fill noted in B-2 might indicate that the bore hole was placed in the original location of West's Point and thus was not part of a man-made landform; if this is the case, the estimated location of either the test bore site or the historic shoreline indicated in Exhibit 21 is in error.



 Project Area

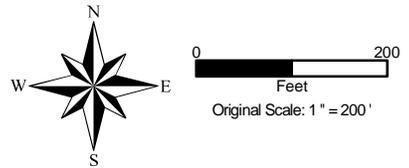


Photo Source: Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.

Exhibit 20 February 2012 Natural Color Imagery

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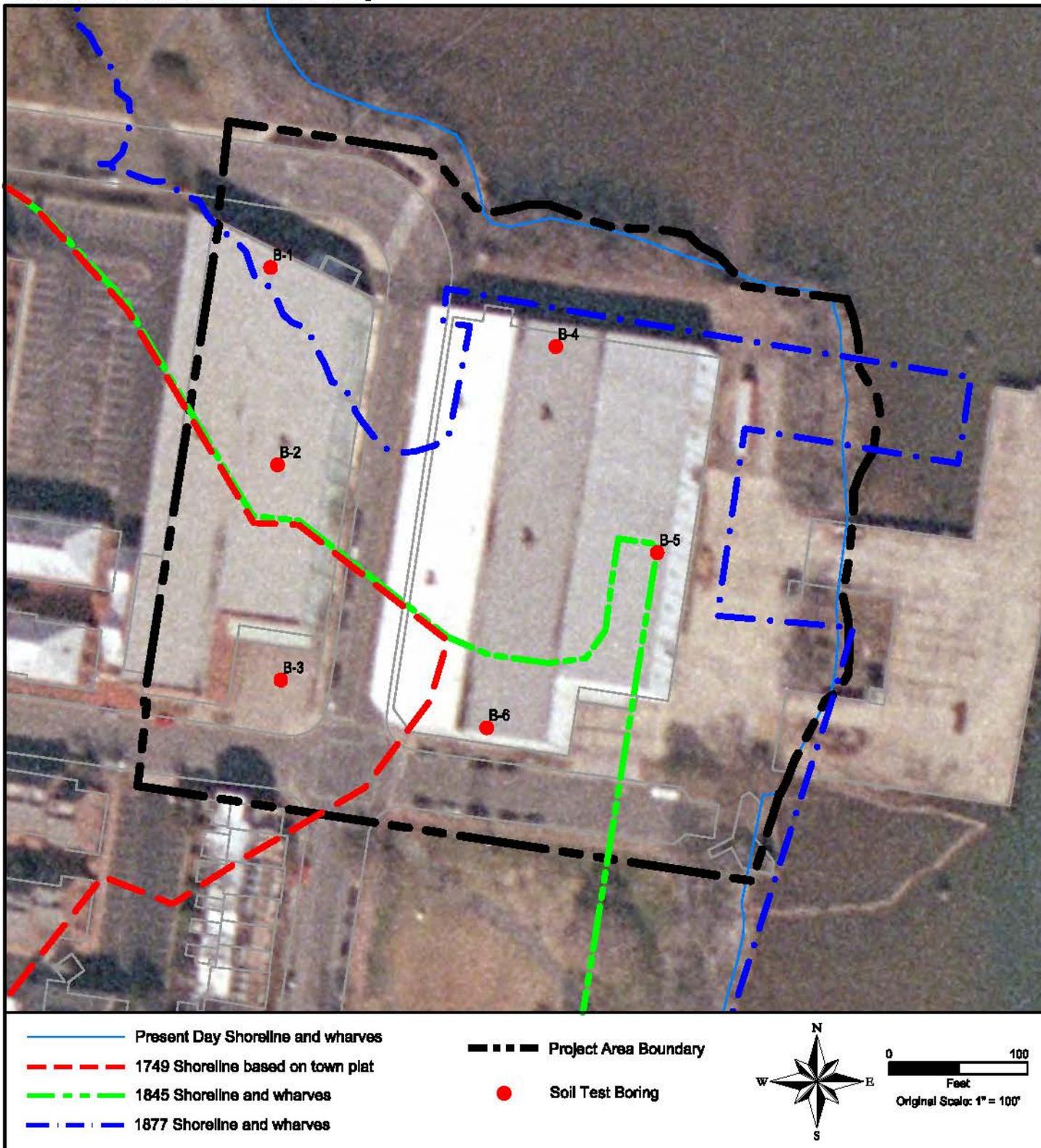


Exhibit 21
2008 ECS Test Bores and Historic Shorelines

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF ARCHEOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposed redevelopment of the Robinson North Terminal property will require compliance with local historic preservation laws as described below.

Alexandria Archaeology Protection Code

Alexandria Archeology reviews all development projects, all building permits and other code enforcement permits which involve ground disturbance within the City, as defined in **Section 2-15: Ground Disturbing Activity**:

Any movement of earth or substrate, manually or mechanically, including but not limited to any modification of existing grade by dredging, demolition, excavation or fill, grading, scraping, vegetation removal, landscaping, coring, well drilling, pile driving, undergrounding utility lines, trenching, bulldozing, sheeting, shoring and excavation for laying or removing foundations, pilings or other purposes, for which any permit or approval is required under the provisions of the city code.

The **Archaeology Protection Code**, which is located in **Section 11-411** of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, requires developers to evaluate the effects of their projects on potential historic resources and take appropriate preservation actions if necessary.

Prior to the filing of an application for approval of a preliminary site plan for any project, the applicant must confer with the Office of Archaeology (Alexandria Archaeology) in order to complete a preliminary assessment of the potential archeological significance of the site plan area and of the impact of the planned development. The assessment is based on the following criteria:

Section 11-411 (E) Criteria for preliminary assessment

- (1) *Research value. The extent to which the archaeological data that might be contained on the property would contribute to the expansion of knowledge.*
- (2) *Rarity. The degree of uniqueness the property's resources possess and their potential for providing archaeological information about a person, structure, event or historical process, for which there are very few examples in Alexandria.*
- (3) *Public Value. The level of importance the property has to the community as a location associated with a significant person, structure, event or historical process.*
- (4) *Site integrity. The extent to which soil stratigraphy and original placement and condition of archaeological resources on the property have not been*

disturbed or altered in a manner which appreciably reduces their research or public value.

- (5) *Presence of materials. The extent to which archaeological resources or evidence of historic structures are present on the property.*
- (6) *Impact on resources. The extent to which any proposed ground disturbing activities will alter or destroy resources which the director has determined to have substantial archaeological significance under sections 11-411(E)(1) through (5) above.*

If Alexandria Archaeology determines that the project has the potential for archeological resources that would be adversely affected by the planned development, they will then require that a background *Documentary Study* report, *Archaeological Evaluation* report and *Resource Management Plan* be submitted as part of the preliminary site plan application. The *Documentary Study* and *Archaeological Evaluation* reports must be prepared by a qualified archeologist or historian and will follow guidelines developed in consultation with the Office of Archeology (Alexandria Archaeology) (i.e. a written scope of work).

Documentary Study:

- The ultimate goal of the documentary research is to identify, as precisely as possible, the potential locations of archeological resources that may be located within the property and to develop a historical context for the interpretation of these potential resources.
- The archival research shall include, but is not limited to, a search of deeds, plats, title documents, probate and other court records; tax and census records; business directories; published and unpublished manuscripts of first-hand accounts (such as letters, diaries, and county histories); historical maps; newspaper articles; previous archaeological research; pedological, geological and topographic maps; modern maps, previous construction plans and photographs that can indicate locations of previous ground disturbance; and information on file with Alexandria Archaeology and the local history sections of public libraries in northern Virginia.
- The archival research will result in an account of the chain of title, a description of the owners and occupants, and a discussion of the land-use history of the property through time. It will include the development of research questions that could provide a framework for the archaeological work and the development of historic contexts for the interpretation of the site. The work will present the potential for the archaeological work to increase our understanding of Alexandria's past and will highlight the historical and archaeological significance of the property

Archaeological Evaluation³ Study:

- The purpose of this study is to conduct an archeological investigation on the property. This may involve a combination of hand and machine excavations to identify and evaluate archeological resources. If the event that features are encountered, additional work will be needed to access the significance of the findings.
- Archeological artifacts recovered from the project will be cleaned, stabilized (if necessary), cataloged, labeled and packaged in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards*.
- A report will be prepared which will integrate the results of the background research, present the results of the field investigations, assess the potential significance of any archeological sites found, and make recommendations for any additional archeological work which may be necessary.
- Finally, the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards* requires that public interpretation be part of the *Archaeological Evaluation Report*. This may include a summary of the results suitable for a public audience, text for an interpretive marker, and the development of themes that could be used to integrate the historic character of the property into the design of the project.

Federal Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act

Development projects on private land may be subject to federal laws that require consideration of the historic resources on or near the project property. There are two principal authorities that govern the federal government's responsibility for the treatment of historic resources. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) directs the government to take into consideration the impact of its actions on the environment, which includes the natural, as well as cultural resources. Historic resources, including archeological sites and all manner of historic properties, are considered part of the environment and, thereby, enjoy some protection under this umbrella law.

The specific protection/treatment of historic resources is directed by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). This act very simply states that all federal agencies must "take into account" the effects of their actions on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (which was also created by this legislation) the opportunity to comment on their actions.

³ Note: the *Archaeological Evaluation* includes all three levels of archeological investigations (Phase I Identification, Phase II Evaluation and Phase III Data Recovery) included in the Virginia DHR Guidelines.

A federal undertaking is defined in the Section 106 regulations as “a project, activity, or program funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a Federal agency, including those carried out by or on behalf of a Federal agency; those carried out with Federal financial assistance; those requiring a Federal permit, license or approval...”

Levels of Archeological Investigations

Following the [*Guidelines for Archeological Investigations in Virginia*](#) (DHR 2011), there are three levels of archeological investigations that are used to fulfill requirements of Section 106 regulations in Virginia. These are designated Phase I (identification), Phase II (evaluation), and Phase III (treatment) investigations. These are described briefly below.

The goals of a **Phase I survey** are to locate and identify all archeological sites within a project area, to estimate site boundaries, and to assess the site’s potential eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Phase I investigations include background research that identifies previous archeological investigations on and near the project and establishes prehistoric and historic contexts for sites potentially located on the project area. The field component of a Phase I investigation should be appropriate to existing field conditions (in this case may require mechanical excavation). It should be noted that ordinarily the precise boundaries of a site are not established during a Phase I investigation. The definition of site boundaries requires additional work and is normally part of a Phase II investigation.

The goals of a **Phase II investigation** (also known as a site evaluation) are to determine whether the site is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and to provide recommendations for future treatment of the site. These investigations include expanded background research and field testing focused on defining the site boundaries and determining site chronology, function, organization, and integrity. The results of these investigations are then evaluated to determine if the site is eligible for the National Register.

Archeological sites are most frequently eligible because of their potential to yield important information about prehistory or history. Once the site boundaries are defined during the Phase II investigation,

Phase III investigations (data recovery) are conducted on National Register eligible sites when it has been determined that preservation is not a practical treatment. The goal of a Phase III investigation is to make a record of a site before it is destroyed. The objective is to recover sufficient data from a site to address defined research questions and make its physical existence redundant. There is no single way to proceed, and each investigation is tailored to the specific site in question.

Preparation of a Memorandum of Agreement

Concurrent with the determination of whether or not there are National Register eligible properties on or near the project area is the issue of whether or not they will be affected by the proposed undertaking and, if so, how. In order to make this determination, the agency must know the following: (1) what will happen during the proposed undertaking and where; (2) what National Register eligible historic properties are likely to be affected either directly or indirectly by these actions; and (3) whether or not the effects of these actions on the property would be adverse.

The determination of what kind of and where actions will take place is entirely project-specific and involves the definition of the area that will be directly affected by the proposed actions and the area that will be indirectly affected. Indirect effects may include visual, atmospheric, and/or audible changes to the setting of an historic property. The entire area that will be directly and indirectly affected by the proposed undertaking is referred to as the “Area of Potential Effect” (APE)

When it has been determined that an undertaking will affect an historic property, it must then be determined whether the effect is adverse. An adverse effect is defined in [36 CFR 800.5a](#) as anything that would “diminish the integrity of the property’s location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association.” This somewhat mystifying definition may best be understood as anything that compromises the qualities of a property that lend it significance. Examples of adverse effects include physical destruction, removal of a property from its historic location, neglect, certain alterations to a property, changes of the property’s use, and transfer, lease, or sale of the property. The regulations also state that adverse effects “... may include reasonably foreseeable effects caused by the undertaking that may occur later in time, be farther removed in distance or be cumulative” (36 CFR 800.5a1).

If an archeological site which is felt to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places may be impacted by the proposed development, WSSI can prepare a **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)** and direct the consultation process for the project. The MOA will stipulate the type of archeological investigation (Phase III/Data recovery work) necessary to mitigate for the adverse effects to the archeological site and must be completed and signed by all consulting parties prior to the issuance of federal permits. This may result in additional project delays while the consulting process is being concluded.



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BAR Concept Review

5/3/00

Since 1988, the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance has expressly required the "height, mass and scale of buildings or structures" to be a factor used by the Board of Architectural Review in passing on the appropriateness of proposed construction. The Board has since that time -- by unwritten policy -- reviewed projects requiring Planning Commission review of a new building or significant additions under what has been called "Conceptual Review". Applicants requesting conceptual review are docketed for public hearing at a regular session of the Board. In this review, the Board determines whether the "scale, mass and architectural character" of a proposal is appropriate within the historic district. The Board determines in this preliminary review whether the size and architectural style of the building is generally appropriate in relation to its surroundings. For projects on Washington Street or within the Potomac River Vicinity the Board also makes a formal finding of compliance with the additional standards listed in the Zoning Ordinance, to the extent that this is possible without final architectural details.

Detailed design elements: colors, signs, window details, etc. are deferred for restudy and final approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness if, and when, the project is approved by Planning Commission or City Council. The applicant thus avoids spending substantial additional money for design fees to develop architectural details and the Board does not spend time reviewing the details of a project which may not receive approval of, or which may be modified by, Planning Commission or City Council. The applicant is also able to determine early in the review process whether the BAR feels the building envelope is appropriate and can verify the project proforma prior to a large expenditure of professional fees.

Staff then forwards the Board's findings regarding the appropriateness of a proposed project's scale and mass in the staff report to Planning Commission and, in the case of a Development Special Use Permit, to City Council. However, no Certificate of Appropriateness is granted until after the project receives zoning approval by Planning Commission or Council, responds to any revisions required by these other bodies and the applicant returns to the Board for approval of the final design details. However, if a project requires major zoning modifications, staff routes projects to the Planning Commission first based on the presumption that if a project is not legally buildable, then the BAR should not be spending time on design review.

It has been recommended by the Washington Street Task Force that the Board cease the practice of Conceptual Review. While some Board members have been uncomfortable with appearing to approve a project without full knowledge of the architectural detailing, staff believes that there are some significant advantages to the community, the applicant and the Board in continuing Conceptual Review.

If a project is taken to Planning Commission and City Council for approval first, then detailed illustrative drawings of the building will have been presented to citizen associations, City staff, Planning Commission and City Council who will rely on these representations in their approval. For projects in the Potomac River Vicinity or on Washington Street, the Planning Commission

and City Council will necessarily become the bodies required to make a finding of compliance with the additional standards before the project may proceed. In addition, a project of any size requires approval of a Preliminary Site Plan, which involves numerous detailed engineering drawings of the building site. In effect, the entire building will have been designed in some detail and these drawings will form the basis for neighborhood and Council approvals. Design revision by the BAR may require re-approval by all of these groups. Further, the applicant will have invested tens of thousands of dollars in attorney, engineer and architects fees and will be very reluctant to make meaningful changes to the building design. Finally, there would be no benefit for the BAR to deny final approval of a project when the applicant can appeal to City Council -- who would already have approved the project.

Unfortunately, attorneys frequently represent before the Planning Commission and Council that projects which have received only concept review have been "approved" by the BAR. In addition, citizens may not be aware of the BAR public hearing or assume the BAR will deny a request and are then upset that the building envelope has been approved before they have had an opportunity to comment on the size of the project.

Therefore, the Washington Street Task Force has recommended abolishing conceptual review by the BAR and substituting a joint, informational work session of the Planning Commission and BAR for all new buildings within a block of Washington Street. While this proposal has some merit and would allow FAR and traffic impacts to be discussed at the same time that the interrelated subject of building mass and scale is being reviewed, it also has the potential to dilute any real discussions on design because of the practical amount of time this will consume and the difficulty of gathering two boards together for a presentation with public comment. Concept review for major projects today frequently extends over two or three BAR meetings. BAR members often request that certain elements be restudied or simply want to revisit the site and reflect on the applicant's presentation or public comments received. On the other hand, the number of potential development projects requiring this joint review is relatively small, perhaps twice per year.

Staff recommends that the Board continue the practice of conceptual review but incorporate it *as a* formal step in the BAR's Certificate of Appropriateness process for relevant projects throughout the historic districts. The Board would be required to make a formal finding of appropriateness of the scale, mass and architectural character of any new building prior to its review by Planning Commission and Council. The expanded Washington Street standards recommended by the Task Force will provide additional guidance from City Council regarding community expectations for this street. A written policy should also be established so that the BAR, applicants, Council and the public understand exactly what is (and is not) being approved in conceptual review and why. Staff believes that the BAR is the most qualified body to review and comment on design issues and should avoid being drawn into work sessions where traffic, density and use are the primary concerns.

CONCEPTUAL BAR APPROVAL POLICY

1. **BAR concept approval is required in the following cases:**
 - a. The proposal requires an SUP for additional density or height;
 - b. The proposal requires Planning Commission review for a new building;
 - c. Staff determines that the proposal requires preliminary review because the design would be a principal determining factor in the ultimate approval by other bodies.
 - d. The only exception to the above will be when the zoning approval needed by the Planning Commission or Council is so uncertain and so critical to the basic format of the proposal, that, in staff's opinion, changes to the application are likely and review by the BAR would have to be repeated.

2. In a case before it for conceptual approval, the BAR shall make findings on the following issues:
 - a. Appropriateness of scale, mass and general architectural character;
 - b. Additional standards where applicable (such as Washington Street or the Potomac River Vicinity) have been met.