

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

Alexandria Board of Architectural Review
Parker-Gray District

Wednesday, February 25, 2015
7:30pm, City Council Chambers, City Hall
301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Members Present: Robert Duffy, Chair
Theresa del Ninno, Vice-Chair
Purvi Irwin
William Conkey
Brendan Owens
Matthew Slowick
Philip Moffat

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning
Mary Catherine Collins, Historic Preservation Planner
Catherine Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner

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

I. MINUTES

Consideration of the minutes of the public hearing of, 2014.

BOARD ACTION: Approved as submitted, 3-0-2.

On a motion by Mr. Slowick, seconded by Ms. del Ninno, the minutes were approved, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 3-0-2, with Ms. Irwin and Mr. Owens abstaining. Mr. Conkey and Mr. Moffat arrived after this item.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

The Board held an informal BAR Concept Review work session with public testimony to discuss the redevelopment of 699 North Patrick St (Ramsey Homes).

SPEAKERS

Duncan Blair, attorney for ARHA, the applicant, introduced the project and the process for public outreach and review, as well as the limitations of this project.

Roy Priest, CEO of ARHA, provided background on the existing Ramsey Homes site (acquired by the City in 1956) and also explained how this site fit within ARHA's redevelopment portfolio. Mr. Priest also noted that the economics did not allow for upgrading the existing buildings.

Smita Anand, KTGy, project architect, gave an overview of the design of the project and explained how they addressed concerns about height, scale and mass.

Gail Rothrock, 209 Duke Street, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, noted that the existing buildings were a contributing resource to the National Register district. She spoke in opposition to the proposed demolition and believed that four of the six criteria related to a Permit to Demolish were met. She recommended renovation and an addition. She also inquired whether a Section 106 review would be required.

Glen Roe, 920 Pendleton Street, spoke in opposition, finding that the proposal was in contrast to the BAR's adopted policies and that the project would diminish the character of the historic district.

Leslie Zupan, president of the West Old Town Civic Association, expressed concern regarding the proposed height, scale and mass of the project, as well as the canyonization of the Route 1 corridor.

Matt Shuba, 515 North Patrick Street, agreed with the previous speakers and noted that the project should consider the scale of the surrounding buildings.

Susan Nelson, 624 North Patrick Street, spoke in support of the project and revitalization.

Mykhalyo Panarin, 909 Pendleton Street, spoke in opposition, finding it inconsistent with the related master plans and noting the significant impact on immediately adjacent properties.

Katie Springer, 600 North Alfred Street, spoke in opposition, expressing concern about the demolition and also the height, scale and mass.

Gabriel Behr, 622 North Patrick Street, expressed concerns and recommended a lower height and preservation of the green open space.

Ninette Sadusky, 910 Pendleton Street, spoke in opposition to the project and recommended retaining and rehabilitating the existing Ramsey Homes, not demolition.

Mark Mueller, 414 South Royal Street, spoke in opposition of the project finding high-density was not appropriate in this historic neighborhood.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Chairman Duffy noted that the applicant was very early in the process and noted that the consideration of the demolition, the context of the project and the general architectural character were very important to consider at this time.

Mr. Moffatt stated that he supported revitalization in the neighborhood but preferred the rehabilitation of the existing buildings as the approach. He found that some of the criteria for a Permit to Demolish were met, including Numbers 1, 4, 5 and 6. He recommended rehabilitating

the existing buildings and the consideration of additions instead. He also asked whether a Section 106 process would be required. The applicant responded that they would look into that but did not think it was necessary. He also noted that when an applicant proposes a compromise solution or design, that it should be closer to the target rather than something so extreme. He opposed the height, scale mass and canyonization of Route 1. He noted that this site was in the heart of Parker-Gray.

Mr. Slowik agreed with Mr. Moffatt's comments about demolition and meeting the criteria for a Permit to Demolish. He wanted to hear more about rehabilitation as an alternative. He noted that the James Bland redevelopment site was a different context and could be a larger scale. He stated that a different design was necessary here because this site is closer to historic buildings with a smaller scale. He thought the height and scale were wholly inappropriate and that it was too early to discuss architectural character.

Ms. Irwin agreed that the applicant should first look at what can be done with the existing buildings. She also was concerned about the loss of green space. She noted that the number of units and project viability was not a BAR issue. She said that the applicant needed to provide an analysis of the rhythm of the adjacent buildings. She also thought it was too tall and premature to talk about style but believed the architecture should be of its time and not historic mimicry. She advised the applicant to look at the amount of open space and the importance of free play, and also noted that the BAR encouraged new and untried approaches.

Ms. del Ninno stated that the existing buildings did not have much glamour to them but she understood that they had significance. She recommended studying the retention of at least some of the existing buildings. She found the project too massive. She advised the architect to look at Parker-Gray architecture to understand the characteristics of this area, noting that the buildings historically were simple, featured porches and did not have large mansard roofs.

Mr. Conkey noted that he usually supported additional density but this time agreed with the comments already made by his fellow BAR members. He stated that he would likely support demolition if there were a good enough reason. He noted that the proposed buildings were really big. He differentiated this proposal from the James Bland project, which he supported, by explaining that it became its own context due to the scale of the project. He noted that this project was within a block with historic buildings and that even the Charles Houston Recreation Center was not this big. He found the mass and scale to be too big. He noted that the architectural character was fighting itself. He thought the townhouses and mansard roofs were too big. He opposed a condo building that tried to look like townhouses, stating a strong preference for an honest architectural expression. He stated that if demolition were appropriate, that a larger building should be at the proper scale and rhythm.

Mr. Owens appreciated the early involvement by the applicant and the comments from the neighbors. He stated that the existing buildings were unique and that maybe at least one could be preserved. He hoped for a satisfying resolution for everyone. He said that the project was not at a point where there could be a meaningful architectural discussion. He thought the project was too big with respect to height, scale and mass. He was disappointed that one third of the site was

dedicated to parking. He suggested looking at below-grade parking and retaining more open space. He noted this was a start but there was more to do.

Chairman Duffy thanked the applicant for coming to the BAR early in the process. He stated that it was rare that the entire BAR would be of a similar mind but that the comments indicated the project was very far from the target. He noted that this site was in the heart of Parker-Gray. He said that lots of citizen engagement would be necessary. He advised restudying the height, scale, and mass. He noted that economics were important but beyond the BAR's purview. He recommended bringing more details about the overall context for future work sessions. He recommended that the applicant work with BAR staff to find an appropriate architectural vocabulary. He noted that this block was unique in Parker-Gray with the amount of open space. He advocated for more open space. He concluded by noting that the BAR members were all of a similar mindset on this case and that they looked forward to working on this project.

The Board discussed and provided comment on the draft revised *Design Guidelines for the Parker-Gray Historic District*.

SPEAKERS

Gail Rothrock, representing the HAF, said that she found the new layout attractive and asked that the Board consider including language that requires full view storm doors to have clear and non-reflective glass as well as minimal rails and stiles. She urged the Board to require new synthetic siding replicate the known historic profile.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board found that the draft guidelines reflected the findings of the Ad-Hoc Design Guidelines Workgroup and provided comments for revisions. The Board clarified the siding policy for administrative approvals, so that: if historic siding is extant and salvageable on the sides and rears of early buildings, it should be first used to patch the front elevation where needed, and then preserved in situ on the sides and rear. Where historic siding is not present or beyond reasonable repair on the sides and rear of early buildings, staff can administratively approve any high quality composite such as fiber cement or Boral in *any* historically appropriate profile.

REASON

The Board generally supported the proposed content of the draft *Design Guidelines* chapters for Mechanical Equipment, Doors, Stoops & Steps, and Siding.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Conkey, seconded by Ms. Irwin, the Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:38 PM.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

The following items are shown for information only. Based on the Board's adopted policies, these have been approved by Staff since the previous Board meeting.

CASE BAR2014-0347

Request for window replacement at **632 N Columbus St.**

Applicant: Thariq Kara

CASE BAR2014-0364

Request for fence replacement and new gate at **708 N Patrick St.**

Applicant: Mark Moses

CASE BAR2014-0364

Request for fence replacement and new gate at **708 N Patrick St.**

Applicant: Mark Moses

CASE BAR2014-0384

Request for replacement windows and doors, and repair of cornice, door surround, window trim and rear siding at **1008 ½ Oronoco St.**

Applicant: Douglas Foord

CASE BAR2014-0411

Request for window replacement at **903 Princess St.**

Applicant: Hugh Carmichael

CASE BAR2014-0419

Request for window replacement at **900 Pendleton St.**

Applicant: James Walsh & Elsie Mosqueda

CASE BAR2014-0421

Request for a new fence at **432 N Peyton St.**

Applicant: Samuel Bellas

CASE BAR2014-0421

Request for a new fence at **305 Buchanan St.**

Applicant: James McMullin

CASE BAR2015-00028

Request for a new fence at **1603 Princess St.**

Applicant: Lynsey Crandall

Minutes submitted by,

Catherine Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner
Boards of Architectural Review