

# Parker Gray Green Space



hila kel  
16  
9-12-15

## Jackie Henderson

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**From:** Mark Jinks  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 09, 2015 5:13 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** Emily Baker; Helen McIlvaine; Karl Moritz  
**Subject:** Ramsey Redevelopment Options: ARHA analysis of Option B  
**Attachments:** Redevelopment Options.pdf

Although on Saturday the issue before Council is only the Ramsey demolition question with the six historic preservation criteria being the only consideration points, public testimony on Saturday will likely raise the desire by some for a compromise alternative where two Ramsey buildings are retained and two are demolished. In order that Council can put what they may hear from the public in perspective, the following information is provided.

Yesterday the City-ARHA Redevelopment Committee met and ARHA presented new/updated information on Option B (demolish two Ramsey buildings and keep two buildings) which was discussed and depicted in the staff memo you all received last Friday night. ***The key handout from that meeting indicating ARHA's view of Option B is attached.*** As you can see in looking at it ARHA staff view:

- the cost of Option B \$15.9 million nearly the same as the Recommended 53 unit plan of \$16.5 million,
- Option B would not likely receive any kind of tax credits which are key to financing,
- Option B would have too many 1-bedroom units and not enough 2-bedroom units to get HUD approval, and
- Option B would need to be financed with a large \$10.4 mortgage that would not have an adequate income stream earned from the project's rental income.
- There are other issues noted on the attached.

City staff saw this ARHA information chart for the first time yesterday and is reviewing it. It is our goal to get a memo to Council tomorrow with a more detailed analysis after City and ARHA staff talk about this information.

# Redevelopment Options

## Programs

	ARHA	Option B
Demolish: No. of Buildings	4	2
Rehabilitation: Buildings	0	2
Rehabilitation: Units	0	8
New Construction:	53	22
1 Bedrooms	6	11
2 Bedrooms	43	7*
3 Bedrooms	4	4
Parking	Underground: 29	Surface: 20

**\*In this model, we modified the City's unit count based on the notion that we are preserving the right to return for the existing families, and therefore would need (15) 2-bed units at a minimum.**

## Budget & Finance

	ARHA	Option B
Total Development Cost	\$16,454,184	\$15,852,019
TDC/Unit	\$310,456	\$528,400
TDC/NRSF	\$285	\$580
Debt	\$6,056,264	\$15,852,019
LIHTC Equity	\$10,396,880	\$0*
VHDA Predevelopment Loan	\$100,000	\$100,000
Land Value/Acquisition	\$3,792,560	\$3,792,560
Developer Fee	\$1,600,000**	\$653,206**
Initializing DSCR	1.33	.03***
VHDA Tax Credit Score	Marginally competitive	Does not meet the 425 Point Threshold for 9% Tax Credits

**\*VHDA LIHTC Score:** The score for Option B would not be funded by VHDA as it is substantially below the minimal threshold for either 4% or 9% LIHTC.

**\*\*In both Option B and ARHA the developer fee is lower than the fee allowed by VHDA.**

**\*\*\*Operating Proforma does not have positive cash flow at stabilization, therefore, could not be underwritten. By Year 5 the DSCR is negative (.01).**

### **Clarifications Needed for Option B**

1. **Accessibility:** The new construction units as drawn are not 504 compliant. The LIHTC Option B model was based on information provided. If 504-compliant units are built either (1) the footprint will need to be larger, (2) the number of units will have to be decreased. Option B would required 5 accessible units at a proportion of unit types.
  - a. The laundry must be side-by-side, not stacked.
  - b. The bathroom is too small to accommodate the 60" turning radius and, if made larger, the access to the bedroom would be blocked.
  - c. Entry door into the vestibule is too small to accommodate a landing for turn into unit
  - d. Interior doors too narrow.
2. **Loss of 2-Bedroom Units:** Option B initially proposed to demolish seven existing 2-bedroom units, without replacing them. Due to a lack of relocation options, ARHA modeled the draft application of the Option B proposal by converting seven 3-bedroom units into seven 2-bedroom units.
3. **Percentage of 1-Bedroom Units:** Option B includes eleven 1-bedroom units, which represents 37% of the total unit count. Applications that put forth a program where 1-bedroom units comprise more than 20% of the total units, are penalized.
4. **Developer Fee:** In both Option B and ARHA, the developer fee is lower than the fee allowed by VHDA.
5. **VHDA LIHTC Score:** The score for Option B would not be funded by VHDA as it is substantially below the minimal threshold for either 4% or 9% LIHTC.
6. **Negative Cash Flow:** From Year 1 Option B is incapable of meeting debt service.
7. **Design Costs:** To date, ARHA has committed nearly \$800,000 in predevelopment costs toward the 53-unit concept. The designers would have to be paid to date for any work completed on the current concept, and that cost would have to go toward the soft cost of the City's concept as it would have to be incurred by any new Owner that developed the site. These additional soft costs are not included in the modeled numbers for Option B.
8. **Units/Total Development Costs:** The TDC for Option B is roughly \$600,000, or 4%, lower than ARHA's TDC. Yet, the Option B proposal delivers substantially fewer units than ARHA's model; thirty units compared to ARHA's fifty-three unit plan.
9. **Land Value:** The Option B TDC included only \$1.2MM for the land. ARHA modeled the TDC with the full assessed value of the site as shown on the City Assessor's website as that would be the lowest amount that would be required to induce ARHA to sell the development site.



## Jackie Henderson

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**From:** Mark Jinks  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2015 9:39 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** Jeremy McPike; Laura Triggs; Emily Baker  
**Subject:** FW: Call.Click.Connect. #80177: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Silberberg  
**Attachments:** Response to Heidi Ford.pdf; ATT00001.htm  
**Importance:** High

When ARHA developed this memo, it appears that there was no consultation with General Services by them about the Health Department sales price. ARHA reaches a conclusion that City staff does not agree with. We will have a response memo to Council by cob today.

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**From:** Rose Boyd <[Rose.Boyd@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Rose.Boyd@alexandriava.gov)>  
**Date:** September 9, 2015 at 2:29:50 PM EDT  
**To:** Allison Silberberg <[allison.silberberg@alexandriava.gov](mailto:allison.silberberg@alexandriava.gov)>, Del Pepper <[redella.pepper@alexandriava.gov](mailto:redella.pepper@alexandriava.gov)>, John Chapman <[john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov](mailto:john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov)>, Justin Wilson <[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)>, Paul Smedberg <[paul.smedberg@alexandriava.gov](mailto:paul.smedberg@alexandriava.gov)>, Timothy Lovain <[timothy.lovain@alexandriava.gov](mailto:timothy.lovain@alexandriava.gov)>, William Euille <[William.Euille@alexandriava.gov](mailto:William.Euille@alexandriava.gov)>  
**Cc:** "rpriest@arha.us" <[rpriest@arha.us](mailto:rpriest@arha.us)>, "Ian Hawkins ([ihawkins@ARHA.US](mailto:ihawkins@ARHA.US))" <[ihawkins@ARHA.US](mailto:ihawkins@ARHA.US)>, "cstaudinger@arha.us" <[cstaudinger@arha.us](mailto:cstaudinger@arha.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: Call.Click.Connect. #80177: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Silberberg

All,

Attached is a copy of the response to the email from Heidi Ford. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Rose

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**From:** William Euille [<mailto:William.Euille@alexandriava.gov>]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 31, 2015 3:07 PM  
**To:** [ha.ford123@yahoo.com](mailto:ha.ford123@yahoo.com)  
**Cc:** City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton  
**Subject:** Re: Call.Click.Connect. #80177: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Silberberg

Thanks Heidi for your expressed comments and suggestions, as they will be very helpful to all in going forward with the public discussion and final decisions.

Always,  
Bill

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 31, 2015, at 3:03 PM, "[ha.ford123@yahoo.com](mailto:ha.ford123@yahoo.com)" <[ha.ford123@yahoo.com](mailto:ha.ford123@yahoo.com)> wrote:

Dear Call.Click.Connect. User

A request was just created using Call.Click.Connect. The request ID is 80177.

**Request Details:**

- Name: Heidi Ford
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703 283 8241
- Email: [ha.ford123@yahoo.com](mailto:ha.ford123@yahoo.com)
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Silberberg, and City Council,

Next month, City Council will consider the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority appeal of the Parker Gray Board of Architectural Review's unanimous denial of its request to demolish the 15-unit scattered-site public housing complex in the Parker Gray historic district, known as Ramsey Homes. Some are framing this case as historic preservation versus affordable housing, implying it is a zero sum game. However, that is a false dichotomy as both aims can be achieved.

The solution for Ramsey Homes is exactly the route the City took with regard to the old Health Department building at 509 North Saint Asaph St. In 2012 when the City sought to sell off unneeded property, it asked the Old and Historic District board of architectural review (OHAD BAR) to examine the property. The OHAD BAR concluded the building, which is composed of a central core that was built between 1944-1947 and two additions added in the 1970s, to be architecturally and historical significant, and recommended preservation. A June 2012 Memo from the City Manager to City Council argues that the building should be preserved and adaptively reused. Among the reasons City staff cited for preserving the building are fact that it remained remarkably intact, exemplified the City's institutional architecture program from the post war period, represented the work of a well-known regional architecture firm, and that the building was "in scale with the surrounding historic and more recent townhouses buildings." Today, the building's exterior walls remain but the interior has been completely gutted so that the building can be reconfigured into 9 luxury townhomes.

Like the old Health Department building, Ramsey Homes were also built in the 1940s, but in this case they were built as housing for African American defense workers. As such, the Ramsey Homes are significant as an important example of the Federal Government's effort to provide housing for African-American war workers, as well as helping us to understand the role of African Americans and Alexandria played in the war effort. The City cited Ramsey Homes as a contributing resources in the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District listing in the National Register

of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Like the old Health Department building, Ramsey Homes were also designed by a notable local architect, Delos H. Smith. Smith, a member of the original Alexandria BAR, was a noted ecclesiastical architect whose work included two annex buildings at St. Paul's Church, 228 S. Pitt St, as well as the US Capitol Building Prayer Room. Smith specialized in Colonial Revival and Federal Revival styles, making the design of Ramsey Homes in the International style all the more interesting and unique.

Like the old Health Department building, City staff also emphasize among the reasons for preservation that Ramsey Homes help to "maintain the scale and character of this area of the district which is comprised of predominantly two-story buildings..."

Like the old Health Department building, City Council should opt for preservation and adaptive reuse of Ramsey Homes. Just as was done with the Health Department building, the exterior features of Ramsey Homes, its scale, green-space and mature trees, and character can be retained, while the interior of the buildings are completely gutted and remodeled to provide quality affordable housing. This is the environmentally friendly, win-win solution that Council should support.

Respectfully,  
Heidi Ford

- Expected Response Date: Tuesday, September 8

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at [the Call.Click.Connect. staff interface.](#)

If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact [CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov](mailto:CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov) or call 703.746.HELP.

This is an automated email notification of a Call.Click.Connect. request. Please do not reply to this email.

DATE: SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: ROY O. PRIEST, CEO, ALEXANDRIA REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY 

SUBJ: RESPONSE TO EMAIL FROM HEIDI FORD REGARDING RAMSEY HOMES REDEVELOPMENT

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The following responds to the email you received from Heidi Ford which suggested an alternative approach to the redevelopment of the Ramsey Homes site.

In the comparison of Ramsey Homes to the Health Department, there are additional considerations that are unique to ARHA projects that factor into the decision-making process. The City's solution for the Health Department building is a clear departure from what could be done at Ramsey Homes. The distinctions are as follows:

- **Developer Characteristics.** The private developer of the townhomes that are being built on the site of the Health Department is selling 16 homes; if 9 are gut rehab, the 7 will be new construction. The starting prices for the new units are from \$1,899,900 to \$2,099,900 (3,050 to 3,300 sf) and the gut rehab units are starting from \$2,300,000 to the low \$3,000,000 (3,700 – 4,950 sf). All have elevators, garages and private yards or roof decks. If you just take the average selling price, the total development cost at the low end calculates to somewhere around \$40 million for this effort. It is unknown what kind of return the developer will realize.

Conversely, the total development cost for the Ramsey redevelopment is less than \$17 million for 53 total housing units. The units range from 534 square feet for the smallest 1-bedroom to 1,204 for the largest 3-bedroom floor plan. ARHA, a quasi-governmental entity, as the developer has to make a sound decision as to the highest and best use of the asset for the limited funding that is available for affordable housing development. The development program must contain enough units to be competitive for tax credit funding and for the operations to be viable over the course of at least 30 years; and, the project must be marketable to attract investors. Investors will receive a dollar for dollar write off of income taxes for the capital they contribute. ARHA will never have to repay the capital as long as the development remains compliant with a use agreement recorded against the deed. If ARHA is successful in its bid for the tax credit funding, it could receive up to 70% of the total development costs in "free" money. It is this weighty capital that makes affordable housing development work.

- **Disposition of the Asset.** The Health Department site was disposed of by the City and the sale was conditioned on terms that were set forth in the Request for Proposals that governed the selection process. The current land value with the entitlements to build luxury townhomes is \$8,333,875; the City sold the site for \$5,230,000; a difference of \$3,103,875. The City clearly made the decision to discount the site in order to incent a developer to purchase with conditions to preserve and

adaptively reuse. The developer has accepted the risks and reward that come with developing aged real estate, but with what appears to be a significant up front incentive from the City.

The Ramsey Homes development site is not owned by the City and is encumbered by HUD restrictive covenants, recorded against the deed by the federal government. HUD has paid operating subsidies for the development site since it was purchased by ARHA in 1953 and, in return for the subsidies, has a voice in what happens to the development site. In order for the site to be redeveloped, a Disposition Application must be sent to HUD and approval received. When submitted, included in that Application will be the justification for disposition, which justifications are extremely limited by HUD to what they believe is relevant on a nationwide scale. The HUD offered justification for disposition and demolition is that the project is obsolete as to physical condition, location and other factors making it unsuitable for housing purposes, and no reasonable program of modifications is cost-effective to return the public housing project or portion of the project to useful life.

- **Project Funding.** The developer of the Health Department site has modeled the deal understanding the rate of return he and his investors need to undertake the risk of developing the site, and has made a business decision as to whether he can sell the homes at a price that would achieve that return. His offering would be based on the market and what he needs to build to get the sales prices required. ARHA intends to apply for highly competitive 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit funding. In order to score in a competitive range there are a number of amenities that have to be offered and the units must be built to code. In order to attract investors, the units must be marketable, and offer modest amenities such washer/dryers and dishwashers, air conditioning, etc. A renovation of the existing structures to bring the units up to code and increase the footprint to provide the required modern facilities would be so cost prohibitive (from a development as well as operational cost) that, at best, it would cause our application to be marginal; at worst, it would probably not be competitive for the funding needed to create a project that is viable and that includes the critical mass of 50% - 60% Area Median Income households required to sustain the 15 lower-income units that are protected under Resolution 830.
- The estimated cost per unit to renovate the Ramsey Homes is \$162,154; new construction of the current concept is currently budgeted at \$170,000. Public funds cannot be used to complete a project in a manner that is not cost-effective. Spending 95% of the cost of new construction to rehabilitate existing structures that will have a shorter life span is not a fiscally sound decision or a good use of limited resources. Additionally, the cost to operate a renovated project is higher (long-term) than the cost to operate a newly constructed project.
- **Owner Contribution.** ARHA is contributing the value of the development site, currently assessed at \$3.8 million to make the project work. The City was compensated \$5,230,000 for the Health Department site.
- **Ability to preserve the façades.** The developer of the Health Department is leaving the exterior façade intact. The existing building was 24,304 *contiguous* square feet. Ramsey Homes is a total of four buildings. The total square footage in the three largest cube shaped buildings on the Ramsey



site is 2,884; this is less than the smallest floor plan available (3,050) on the redeveloped Health Department site.

In addition to offering units that are a gut rehab of the existing buildings, the developer is doing infill and offering some number of new construction units. The existing Ramsey Homes 2-bedroom/1-bath units are 720 square feet; Ramsey's total built footprint is a total of 10,815 square feet in four buildings. In order to complete the work necessary for the units to be brought up to current codes and marketable as a rental, the units would need to be made larger. Given that the plumbing wall for all of the units dissects the cube shaped buildings, the four exterior walls would have to be moved outward in order to accomplish the code upgrades; therefore, they could not remain intact. Even if the exterior walls were moved and the footprint expanded, the units could never be made handicap accessible code compliant. The units are 2-story with 2 bedrooms and a bath on the top level. Even if you built a bedroom and bath on the first level (by moving the exterior walls) you will not be code compliant because you are segregating the handicap household member from other areas of the home (2<sup>nd</sup> floor). The developer of the Health Department building is building elevators into the new and rehabilitated units. Our buildings could not accommodate elevators either in cost to build or in cost to maintain. Finally, while the developer of the Health Department may have preserved the core of the building, the core of Ramsey Homes is the highest contributor to work order calls given the age and condition of the plumbing contained in the core, and the very thing that ARHA would not be advised to preserve.

- **The scale and character of Ramsey Homes:** Regarding the historic significance of the structures, in March of 2013, the zoning code for the Parker-Gray District significantly departed from the way the BAR previously evaluated properties in the historic district by adopting a local period of architectural significance. This Period of Significance (POS) was adopted in order to prioritize buildings. Each residential property is now to be evaluated based on its original construction date; that date for Ramsey Homes is 1942. For "*Earlier*" buildings, those buildings constructed *before 1932*, the BAR expressed a preference for preservation or reproduction of the exterior building materials, especially on their street facing elevations. Buildings constructed *after 1931* are considered "*Later*" buildings and are subject to a more limited BAR review. The BAR generally considers these "*background*" buildings and recommends much greater flexibility for alterations and new construction, while insuring that "*Later*" buildings, such as Ramsey Homes, remain compatible with, and do not detract from nearby "*Early*" buildings. In fact, we do believe that Ramsey Homes does detract from the nearby buildings because the homes and landscape are out-of-scale in the neighborhood as they lack the density of their neighbors. Their demolition would allow for buildings more consistent with the Parker-Gray Design Guidelines, as amended by the Parker-Gray BAR and the neighborhood, in design, height, and setback.

The property has been in use as a rental community since ARHA purchased the site in 1953. Like the City in the case of the Health Department, over the course of 62 years of ownership, ARHA has improved the homes by removing the skylights and installing hipped roofs, patios and stucco (pre-1979). In 1995, with the approval of the BAR, ARHA extensively remodeled the property, removing the original chain link fence, playground and many plantings. The designers introduced a Colonial Revival makeover with replacement windows, the addition of inoperable aluminum shutters and replacement metal paneled doors, as well as interior upgrades. The unintended result is a

hodgepodge of Prairie and Colonial Revival elements marred by constant alteration, some of which were approved by the BAR. Nonetheless, the accumulation of all of these modifications have caused the buildings to lose integrity of design, setting, feeling, and association.

The three stories proposed by ARHA is not more than one story higher, and in fact, is consistent with or lower than the structures around it. ARHA's design team has worked with City staff, making many concessions to arrive at an appropriate height, scale and mass for the development site. Again the number of units is a result of the preservation of the publicly assisted housing units into a community with a mix of income levels that is large enough to sustain a critical mass of lower income residents in order to maintain the strong social and support networks that are essential to low-income households. This is also the unit number that we believe to be competitive for the tax credit funding that ARHA uses to redevelop its sites.

Finally, in discussions around Ramsey Homes, it should be noted that the famous architect that designed Ramsey Homes designed 440 such projects. Their significance lies in the social history of public affordable housing, something that is increasingly challenging to maintain in one of the most expensive regions in the United States. To celebrate its history, the site should continue to be a source of affordable housing for the city. Preservation of the resource is not absolutely necessary as there is ample opportunity for public interpretation and commemoration of the site's public housing legacy.

**Jackie Henderson**

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16  
9-12-15

**From:** Mark Jinks  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2015 7:19 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** Helen McIlvaine; Karl Moritz; Emily Baker  
**Subject:** Memo to Council - Ramsey Homes Analysis of Option B  
**Attachments:** Ramsey Homes - Comparison of ARHA and City Projections (B Option)1.pdf;  
Comparison of City and ARHA Projections re Ramsey Option B - revised (4).pdf

The attached memo is an FYI.

Mark Jinks  
City Manager

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2015

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

SUBJECT: COMPARISON OF ARHA AND CITY PROJECTIONS REGARDING  
OPTION B FOR RAMSEY HOMES

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While Saturday's decision that Council is facing in regard to the Ramsey Homes demolition question is one where only specific historic preservation criteria can be considered in the demolition decision making process, some of the speakers may advocate for Option B which would entail demolishing two buildings and preserving two buildings.

At Tuesday's meeting of the Redevelopment Work Group regarding Ramsey Homes, ARHA presented new projections regarding the cost and feasibility of the Recommended Proposal, its 53 new-unit redevelopment concept, and Option B, a 30 to 32-unit partial preservation and redevelopment concept that would preserve and renovate two existing buildings comprised of 8 units and construct a new building containing 22 to 24 new units. There were no projections regarding Option C (a renovation of the existing 15 units) as ARHA does not believe this option is financeable or sustainable over the long term.

Since Tuesday, City and ARHA staff have had further discussions and both staffs have refined their assumptions (see attached). ARHA staff view Option B as not financially viable, while City staff believe that that Option B may be financially viable, but more work would need to be done to determine if that is true. Affordable housing finance is one of the most complicated areas of municipal finance. A key factor is whether or not 9% housing tax credits could be awarded from VHDA's very competitive and often oversubscribed tax credit consideration process.

ARHA staff believes that Option B would not be competitive for 9% tax credit financing which is key to the financial viability of the project. City staff believes that 9% tax credits may be possible. The bottom line is that the funding gap under ARHA's scenario is \$11.8 million, while the funding gap under City staff's scenario is \$2.8 million.

Attachment: Comparison of ARHA and City Projections re Option B for Ramsey Homes

cc: The Honorable Members of City Council  
Emily Baker, Acting Deputy City Manager, City Manager's Office  
Karl Moritz, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning  
Helen McIlvaine, Acting Director, Office of Housing  
Eric Keeler, Division Chief, Administration, Office of Housing

**RAMSEY HOMES REDEVELOPMENT  
COMPARISON OF ARHA AND CITY PROJECTIONS FOR OPTION B**

	ARHA	CITY
Total Development Cost	\$14,610,091	\$8,664,822
Total Development Cost (TDC)/Unit	\$487,003	\$288,827
Construction/Soft Costs	\$8,382,531	\$7,674,822
Land	\$3,792,560	\$0
Developer Fee	\$2,435,000	\$653,206
4% Tax Credits	\$2,813,450	\$0
9% Tax Credits	\$0	\$6,498,617
Mortgage	\$0	\$0
Initial Funding Gap	\$11,796,641	\$2,166,206
Utility/Infrastructure	\$0	\$632,000
Total Funding Gap	\$11,796,641	\$2,798,206

**Notes**

1. Option B assumes 30 units, including rehabilitation of 8 existing units (2 buildings) and construction of 30 new units (1 multifamily building).
2. ARHA's land value is based on the 2015 City Real Estate Assessment. Its numbers assume ARHA will be paid this amount.
3. Both the City and ARHA believe that Option B provides a "breakeven" cash flow, so no mortgage debt is assumed.



## Jackie Henderson

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**From:** Mark Jinks  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2015 4:39 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** Jeremy McPike; Laura Triggs; Helen McIlvaine; Karl Moritz  
**Subject:** Ramsey Homes and Comparison with the Health Dept Building site redevelopment  
**Attachments:** Response to Heidi Ford.pdf

In response to the attached memo you received from ARHA today, the following information is provided.

While staff would agree with much of the comparison in the attached ARHA memo that points out the differences between the Health Department site sale by the City and the Ramsey Homes situation (truly an apples vs oranges comparison), staff would not concur with the statement in the attached memo that the City made a decision to discount the site in order to incent the developer. The site was sold on a very competitive basis with 7 bidders responding. The bid selected was one that reflected preserving the Health Department building with a density that staff and Council thought appropriate in context to the site. The price paid was \$5.3 million was slightly higher than the 2011 independent professional appraisal of the property. The other bidders were in the range of \$6.4 million to down to \$2.5 million, with the higher bids rejected as the level of density envisioned in those bids was greater than the City thought appropriate.

**From:** Rose Boyd <[Rose.Boyd@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Rose.Boyd@alexandriava.gov)>  
**Date:** September 9, 2015 at 2:29:50 PM EDT  
**To:** Allison Silberberg <[allison.silberberg@alexandriava.gov](mailto:allison.silberberg@alexandriava.gov)>, Del Pepper <[redella.pepper@alexandriava.gov](mailto:redella.pepper@alexandriava.gov)>, John Chapman <[john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov](mailto:john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov)>, Justin Wilson <[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)>, Paul Smedberg <[paul.smedberg@alexandriava.gov](mailto:paul.smedberg@alexandriava.gov)>, Timothy Lovain <[timothy.lovain@alexandriava.gov](mailto:timothy.lovain@alexandriava.gov)>, William Euille <[William.Euille@alexandriava.gov](mailto:William.Euille@alexandriava.gov)>  
**Cc:** "rpriest@arha.us" <[rpriest@arha.us](mailto:rpriest@arha.us)>, "Ian Hawkins (ihawkins@ARHA.US)" <[ihawkins@ARHA.US](mailto:ihawkins@ARHA.US)>, "cstaudinger@arha.us" <[cstaudinger@arha.us](mailto:cstaudinger@arha.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: Call.Click.Connect. #80177: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Silberberg

All,

Attached is a copy of the response to the email from Heidi Ford. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Rose

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**From:** William Euille [<mailto:William.Euille@alexandriava.gov>]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 31, 2015 3:07 PM  
**To:** [ha.ford123@yahoo.com](mailto:ha.ford123@yahoo.com)  
**Cc:** City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton  
**Subject:** Re: Call.Click.Connect. #80177: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Silberberg

Thanks Heidi for your expressed comments and suggestions, as they will be very helpful to all in going forward with the public discussion and final decisions.

Always,  
Bill

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 31, 2015, at 3:03 PM, "[ha.ford123@yahoo.com](mailto:ha.ford123@yahoo.com)" <[ha.ford123@yahoo.com](mailto:ha.ford123@yahoo.com)> wrote:

Dear Call.Click.Connect. User

A request was just created using Call.Click.Connect. The request ID is 80177.

**Request Details:**

- Name: Heidi Ford
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703 283 8241
- Email: [ha.ford123@yahoo.com](mailto:ha.ford123@yahoo.com)
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Silberberg, and City Council,

Next month, City Council will consider the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority appeal of the Parker Gray Board of Architectural Review's unanimous denial of its request to demolish the 15-unit scattered-site public housing complex in the Parker Gray historic district, known as Ramsey Homes. Some are framing this case as historic preservation versus affordable housing, implying it is a zero sum game. However, that is a false dichotomy as both aims can be achieved.

The solution for Ramsey Homes is exactly the route the City took with regard to the old Health Department building at 509 North Saint Asaph St. In 2012 when the City sought to sell off unneeded property, it asked the Old and Historic District board of architectural review (OHAD BAR) to examine the property. The OHAD BAR concluded the building, which is composed of a central core that was built between 1944-1947 and two additions added in the 1970s, to be architecturally and historical significant, and recommended preservation. A June 2012 Memo from the City Manager to City Council argues that the building should be preserved and adaptively reused. Among the reasons City staff cited for preserving the building are fact that it remained remarkably intact, exemplified the City's institutional architecture program from the post war period, represented the work of a well-known regional architecture firm, and that the building was "in scale with the surrounding historic and more recent townhouses buildings." Today, the building's exterior walls remain but the interior has been completely gutted so that the building can be reconfigured into 9 luxury townhomes.

Like the old Health Department building, Ramsey Homes were also built in the 1940s, but in this case they were built as housing for African

American defense workers. As such, the Ramsey Homes are significant as an important example of the Federal Government's effort to provide housing for African-American war workers, as well as helping us to understand the role of African Americans and Alexandria played in the war effort. The City cited Ramsey Homes as a contributing resources in the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Like the old Health Department building, Ramsey Homes were also designed by a notable local architect, Delos H. Smith. Smith, a member of the original Alexandria BAR, was a noted ecclesiastical architect whose work included two annex buildings at St. Paul's Church, 228 S. Pitt St, as well as the US Capitol Building Prayer Room. Smith specialized in Colonial Revival and Federal Revival styles, making the design of Ramsey Homes in the International style all the more interesting and unique.

Like the old Health Department building, City staff also emphasize among the reasons for preservation that Ramsey Homes help to "maintain the scale and character of this area of the district which is comprised of predominantly two-story buildings..."

Like the old Health Department building, City Council should opt for preservation and adaptive reuse of Ramsey Homes. Just as was done with the Health Department building, the exterior features of Ramsey Homes, its scale, green-space and mature trees, and character can be retained, while the interior of the buildings are completely gutted and remodeled to provide quality affordable housing. This is the environmentally friendly, win-win solution that Council should support.

Respectfully,  
Heidi Ford

- Expected Response Date: Tuesday, September 8

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at [the Call.Click.Connect. staff interface](#).

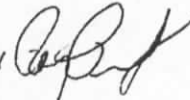
If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact [CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov](mailto:CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov) or call 703.746.HELP.

This is an automated email notification of a Call.Click.Connect. request. Please do not reply to this email.

DATE: SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: ROY O. PRIEST, CEO, ALEXANDRIA REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY



SUBJ: RESPONSE TO EMAIL FROM HEIDI FORD REGARDING RAMSEY HOMES REDEVELOPMENT

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The following responds to the email you received from Heidi Ford which suggested an alternative approach to the redevelopment of the Ramsey Homes site.

In the comparison of Ramsey Homes to the Health Department, there are additional considerations that are unique to ARHA projects that factor into the decision-making process. The City's solution for the Health Department building is a clear departure from what could be done at Ramsey Homes. The distinctions are as follows:

- **Developer Characteristics.** The private developer of the townhomes that are being built on the site of the Health Department is selling 16 homes; if 9 are gut rehab, the 7 will be new construction. The starting prices for the new units are from \$1,899,900 to \$2,099,900 (3,050 to 3,300 sf) and the gut rehab units are starting from \$2,300,000 to the low \$3,000,000 (3,700 – 4.950 sf). All have elevators, garages and private yards or roof decks. If you just take the average selling price, the total development cost at the low end calculates to somewhere around \$40 million for this effort. It is unknown what kind of return the developer will realize.

Conversely, the total development cost for the Ramsey redevelopment is less than \$17 million for 53 total housing units. The units range from 534 square feet for the smallest 1-bedroom to 1,204 for the largest 3-bedroom floor plan. ARHA, a quasi-governmental entity, as the developer has to make a sound decision as to the highest and best use of the asset for the limited funding that is available for affordable housing development. The development program must contain enough units to be competitive for tax credit funding and for the operations to be viable over the course of at least 30 years; and, the project must be marketable to attract investors. Investors will receive a dollar for dollar write off of income taxes for the capital they contribute. ARHA will never have to repay the capital as long as the development remains compliant with a use agreement recorded against the deed. If ARHA is successful in its bid for the tax credit funding, it could receive up to 70% of the total development costs in "free" money. It is this weighty capital that makes affordable housing development work.

- **Disposition of the Asset.** The Health Department site was disposed of by the City and the sale was conditioned on terms that were set forth in the Request for Proposals that governed the selection process. The current land value with the entitlements to build luxury townhomes is \$8,333,875; the City sold the site for \$5,230,000; a difference of \$3,103,875. The City clearly made the decision to discount the site in order to incent a developer to purchase with conditions to preserve and

adaptively reuse. The developer has accepted the risks and reward that come with developing aged real estate, but with what appears to be a significant up front incentive from the City.

The Ramsey Homes development site is not owned by the City and is encumbered by HUD restrictive covenants, recorded against the deed by the federal government. HUD has paid operating subsidies for the development site since it was purchased by ARHA in 1953 and, in return for the subsidies, has a voice in what happens to the development site. In order for the site to be redeveloped, a Disposition Application must be sent to HUD and approval received. When submitted, included in that Application will be the justification for disposition, which justifications are extremely limited by HUD to what they believe is relevant on a nationwide scale. The HUD offered justification for disposition and demolition is that the project is obsolete as to physical condition, location and other factors making it unsuitable for housing purposes, and no reasonable program of modifications is cost-effective to return the public housing project or portion of the project to useful life.

- **Project Funding.** The developer of the Health Department site has modeled the deal understanding the rate of return he and his investors need to undertake the risk of developing the site, and has made a business decision as to whether he can sell the homes at a price that would achieve that return. His offering would be based on the market and what he needs to build to get the sales prices required. ARHA intends to apply for highly competitive 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit funding. In order to score in a competitive range there are a number of amenities that have to be offered and the units must be built to code. In order to attract investors, the units must be marketable, and offer modest amenities such washer/dryers and dishwashers, air conditioning, etc. A renovation of the existing structures to bring the units up to code and increase the footprint to provide the required modern facilities would be so cost prohibitive (from a development as well as operational cost) that, at best, it would cause our application to be marginal; at worst, it would probably not be competitive for the funding needed to create a project that is viable and that includes the critical mass of 50% - 60% Area Median Income households required to sustain the 15 lower-income units that are protected under Resolution 830.
- The estimated cost per unit to renovate the Ramsey Homes is \$162,154; new construction of the current concept is currently budgeted at \$170,000. Public funds cannot be used to complete a project in a manner that is not cost-effective. Spending 95% of the cost of new construction to rehabilitate existing structures that will have a shorter life span is not a fiscally sound decision or a good use of limited resources. Additionally, the cost to operate a renovated project is higher (long-term) than the cost to operate a newly constructed project.
- **Owner Contribution.** ARHA is contributing the value of the development site, currently assessed at \$3.8 million to make the project work. The City was compensated \$5,230,000 for the Health Department site.
- **Ability to preserve the façades.** The developer of the Health Department is leaving the exterior façade intact. The existing building was 24,304 *contiguous* square feet. Ramsey Homes is a total of four buildings. The total square footage in the three largest cube shaped buildings on the Ramsey



site is 2,884; this is less than the smallest floor plan available (3,050) on the redeveloped Health Department site.

In addition to offering units that are a gut rehab of the existing buildings, the developer is doing infill and offering some number of new construction units. The existing Ramsey Homes 2-bedroom/1-bath units are 720 square feet; Ramsey's total built footprint is a total of 10,815 square feet in four buildings. In order to complete the work necessary for the units to be brought up to current codes and marketable as a rental, the units would need to be made larger. Given that the plumbing wall for all of the units dissects the cube shaped buildings, the four exterior walls would have to be moved outward in order to accomplish the code upgrades; therefore, they could not remain intact. Even if the exterior walls were moved and the footprint expanded, the units could never be made handicap accessible code compliant. The units are 2-story with 2 bedrooms and a bath on the top level. Even if you built a bedroom and bath on the first level (by moving the exterior walls) you will not be code compliant because you are segregating the handicap household member from other areas of the home (2<sup>nd</sup> floor). The developer of the Health Department building is building elevators into the new and rehabilitated units. Our buildings could not accommodate elevators either in cost to build or in cost to maintain. Finally, while the developer of the Health Department may have preserved the core of the building, the core of Ramsey Homes is the highest contributor to work order calls given the age and condition of the plumbing contained in the core, and the very thing that ARHA would not be advised to preserve.

- **The scale and character of Ramsey Homes:** Regarding the historic significance of the structures, in March of 2013, the zoning code for the Parker-Gray District significantly departed from the way the BAR previously evaluated properties in the historic district by adopting a local period of architectural significance. This Period of Significance (POS) was adopted in order to prioritize buildings. Each residential property is now to be evaluated based on its original construction date; that date for Ramsey Homes is 1942. For "*Earlier*" buildings, those buildings constructed *before 1932*, the BAR expressed a preference for preservation or reproduction of the exterior building materials, especially on their street facing elevations. Buildings constructed *after 1931* are considered "*Later*" buildings and are subject to a more limited BAR review. The BAR generally considers these "*background*" buildings and recommends much greater flexibility for alterations and new construction, while insuring that "*Later*" buildings, such as Ramsey Homes, remain compatible with, and do not detract from nearby "*Early*" buildings. In fact, we do believe that Ramsey Homes does detract from the nearby buildings because the homes and landscape are out-of-scale in the neighborhood as they lack the density of their neighbors. Their demolition would allow for buildings more consistent with the Parker-Gray Design Guidelines, as amended by the Parker-Gray BAR and the neighborhood, in design, height, and setback.

The property has been in use as a rental community since ARHA purchased the site in 1953. Like the City in the case of the Health Department, over the course of 62 years of ownership, ARHA has improved the homes by removing the skylights and installing hipped roofs, patios and stucco (pre-1979). In 1995, with the approval of the BAR, ARHA extensively remodeled the property, removing the original chain link fence, playground and many plantings. The designers introduced a Colonial Revival makeover with replacement windows, the addition of inoperable aluminum shutters and replacement metal paneled doors, as well as interior upgrades. The unintended result is a

hodgepodge of Prairie and Colonial Revival elements marred by constant alteration, some of which were approved by the BAR. Nonetheless, the accumulation of all of these modifications have caused the buildings to lose integrity of design, setting, feeling, and association.

The three stories proposed by ARHA is not more than one story higher, and in fact, is consistent with or lower than the structures around it. ARHA's design team has worked with City staff, making many concessions to arrive at an appropriate height, scale and mass for the development site. Again the number of units is a result of the preservation of the publicly assisted housing units into a community with a mix of income levels that is large enough to sustain a critical mass of lower income residents in order to maintain the strong social and support networks that are essential to low-income households. This is also the unit number that we believe to be competitive for the tax credit funding that ARHA uses to redevelop its sites.

Finally, in discussions around Ramsey Homes, it should be noted that the famous architect that designed Ramsey Homes designed 440 such projects. Their significance lies in the social history of public affordable housing, something that is increasingly challenging to maintain in one of the most expensive regions in the United States. To celebrate its history, the site should continue to be a source of affordable housing for the city. Preservation of the resource is not absolutely necessary as there is ample opportunity for public interpretation and commemoration of the site's public housing legacy.

**Jackie Henderson**

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16  
9-12-15

**From:** Catherine Miliaras  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 10, 2015 10:11 AM  
**To:** Jackie Henderson; Allison Silberberg; William Euille; Del Pepper; John Chapman; Justin Wilson; LaShawn Timmons; Lillian Thompson; Mark McHugh; Nancy Lacey; Nancy Lavalley; Paul Smedberg; shelli.gilliam; Timothy Lovain; Wendy Donohue  
**Cc:** Mark Jinks; James Banks; Christopher Spera; Kilo Grayson; Sermaine McLean; Gloria Sitton; Laura Triggs; Debra Collins; Emily Baker; Karl Moritz  
**Subject:** RE: Correction to Ramsey Homes BAR Appeal

Correction: **The Parker-Gray BAR denied the Permit to Demolish, 5-0.**

My apologies again for the oversight but that is the correct action.

**Catherine K. Miliaras, AICP**  
City of Alexandria, Virginia  
703.746.3834 (direct)  
[www.alexandriava.gov/preservation](http://www.alexandriava.gov/preservation)

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**From:** Jackie Henderson  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 10, 2015 9:40 AM  
**To:** Allison Silberberg; William Euille; Del Pepper; John Chapman; Justin Wilson; LaShawn Timmons; Lillian Thompson; Mark McHugh; Nancy Lacey; Nancy Lavalley; Paul Smedberg; shelli.gilliam; Timothy Lovain; Wendy Donohue  
**Cc:** Mark Jinks; James Banks; Christopher Spera; Kilo Grayson; Sermaine McLean; Gloria Sitton; Laura Triggs; Debra Collins; Emily Baker; Karl Moritz  
**Subject:** Correction to Ramsey Homes BAR Appeal

Good morning—

Please see the attached for docket item #16 on Saturday's docket.

---

**From:** Catherine Miliaras  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 10, 2015 9:35 AM  
**To:** Jackie Henderson  
**Cc:** Al Cox; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** Correction to Ramsey Homes BAR Appeal

Jackie—

Attached please find an updated PowerPoint presentation for the BAR appeal related to Ramsey Homes to be heard by City Council on September 12<sup>th</sup> (Docket Item #16). The only change is a correction to the BAR's vote for a Permit to Demolish shown on Slide 3. The vote was incorrectly listed as 7-0 when the actual vote was 5-0 as two BAR members were not in attendance. **The Parker-Gray BAR approved the Permit to Demolish, 5-0.**

My apologies for any confusion related to this oversight and please let me know if there are any other questions. We will also note this at the hearing.

Many thanks,

**Catherine K. Miliaras, AICP**

Urban Planner, Historic Preservation  
City of Alexandria, Virginia  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
703.746.3834 (direct)  
[www.alexandriava.gov/preservation](http://www.alexandriava.gov/preservation)

Fwd: Links to various Alexandria housing web sites and documents

Page 1 of 2

McArthur Myers

16  
9-12-15

**Fwd: Links to various Alexandria housing web sites and documents**

alexslim62@comcast.net [alexslim62@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Thursday, September 10, 2015 6:19 PM

**To:** Myers, McArthur (DBH)

**From:** alexslim62@comcast.net

**To:** nanella@aol.com

**Sent:** Saturday, August 22, 2015 12:04:22 PM

**Subject:** Fwd: Links to various Alexandria housing web sites and documents

\*\*\*\* Nancy here are some important links. Attached is the Historical Application and in my mind the "Bible" for Council to follow for if they overturn BAR and some in the community wishes including me, they may as well throw out the codes and ordinance they will hold other residents and business in the Parker-Gray District. So Council should look at but no limit there scope to; Section 7 pg. 2 in summation more than 200 units of public housing was built under the Landam Act between 1940 and 1950. Page 10 speaks on the integrity of the neighborhood and the reasons for the application. Page 12 specifically the Ramsay Homes. Page 13 talk about 413-415 Howell School as a justification/support for the application. Also states "by the 1980 in a third wave of constructions the design of the new building in the district began to be more sophisticated, most copying historic styles in a structured way. THIS IS LARGELY ATTRIBUTABLE OF ORDINANCE PROTECTING MOST OF THE NOMINATED AREA AS A CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT..." Since 1980 many historic houses have been restored to remove non-historic materials. None of this would have happened if the ordinances have not been there Section 7 pgs. 196, 197 and 198. Nancy I hope you will forward this to Paul and to whom you think will read and influence Council decision. Let me know what you think. *Look @ pg 47 of the updated ARHA h report it's speaks value contrary to imitate historical significance contrary to the recommendation*

**From:** "Gail Rothrock" <gcrothrock@gmail.com>

**To:** "ninette sadusky" <Saduskyni@yahoo.com>, "Townley McElhiney" <tmcelhiney@verizon.net>, "McArthur Myers" <alexslim62@comcast.net>

**Sent:** Saturday, July 18, 2015 12:19:10 PM

**Subject:** Fwd: Links to various Alexandria housing web sites and documents

In particular below are the links to the ARHA strategic plan, and Resolution 830 that I mentioned to you Wednesday night.

Gail

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Charles Trozzo <c.trozzo@att.net>

**Subject:** Links to various Alexandria housing web sites and documents

**Date:** July 17, 2015 10:59:28 AM EDT

**To:** Gail Rothrock <gcrothrock@gmail.com>

**Cc:** Charles Trozzo <c.trozzo@att.net>

**Reply-To:** Charles Trozzo <c.trozzo@att.net>

Links to sites and documents related to Alexandra Housing

P&Z Web site re "partnership with ARHA" link  
<file:///H:/WD20131104/AHRPC/ARHA/ARHA%20RFP14-02%20%20Planning%20&%20Zoning%20%20City%20of%20Alexandria,%20VA.html>

ARHA Strategic Plan link

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/ARHASTrategicPlan20122022.pdf>

<https://owa.dc.gov/OWA/?ae=Item&t=IPM.Note&id=RgAAAABqk9%2f3pvrFRL9T%2f...>



16  
9-12-15

**Testimony of the Commission on Aging re: Ramsey Homes**  
**Case # 14-4280**  
**September 12, 2015**

Good afternoon Mayor Euille and Members of City Council. I am [Bob Eiffert/Jan Macidull] of [address], and I am here today representing the Alexandria Commission on Aging. The Commission's Executive Committee voted to support the position of the Housing Affordability Advisory Committee and signed the letter prepared by HAAC Chair Katherine Dixon. That letter urges City Council to reverse the decision of the Parker Gray Board of Architectural Review and to approve the demolition of Ramsey Homes.

The Strategic Plan on Aging adopted by City Council in 2012 endorses the development of affordable, accessible housing for older Alexandrians. With the overwhelming loss of market rate affordable housing in the city, we agree that it is imperative to seize every opportunity to add affordable and accessible housing units whenever and wherever possible. We urge City Council to work with ARHA and affected community groups to find appropriate ways to commemorate and memorialize the legacy and footprint of Alexandria's African Americans.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

16  
9-12-15

September 12, 2015

Dear Mr. Mayor and members of Council:

The Old Town Civic Association Board of Directors has voted unanimously to urge you to uphold the decision of the Parker Gray Board of Architectural Review to reject the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA) application to demolish the Ramsey homes on the 600 block of North Patrick Street.

In the past—before the almighty dollar drove virtually all decisions made in local government-- the City itself (i.e. your predecessors) saw fit to include Ramsey homes as a contributing resource to be considered for the placement of Park-Gray on the National Historic Register. Your predecessors in office proudly noted that, while modestly detailed, the Ramsey homes were attractive models of Craftsman and Prairie-style characteristics.

The Ramsey homes tell a portion of Alexandria's history that deserves to be told but is too often forgotten and all too often abolished. The Ramsey homes were for African-Americans who came to Alexandria to engage in the effort to defeat our enemies during World War II. These were workers who, while still facing enormous discrimination both in the private and the public sectors, nevertheless demonstrated their patriotism by making every effort they could make to ensure the victory of the United States in the war that we had entered only a short time before. These are homes as fully deserving of preservation as any of the finest residences along Captains' Row, and now in fact more threatened as being "insignificant".

We have heard a lot about the maintenance issues that are now present at Ramsey homes.

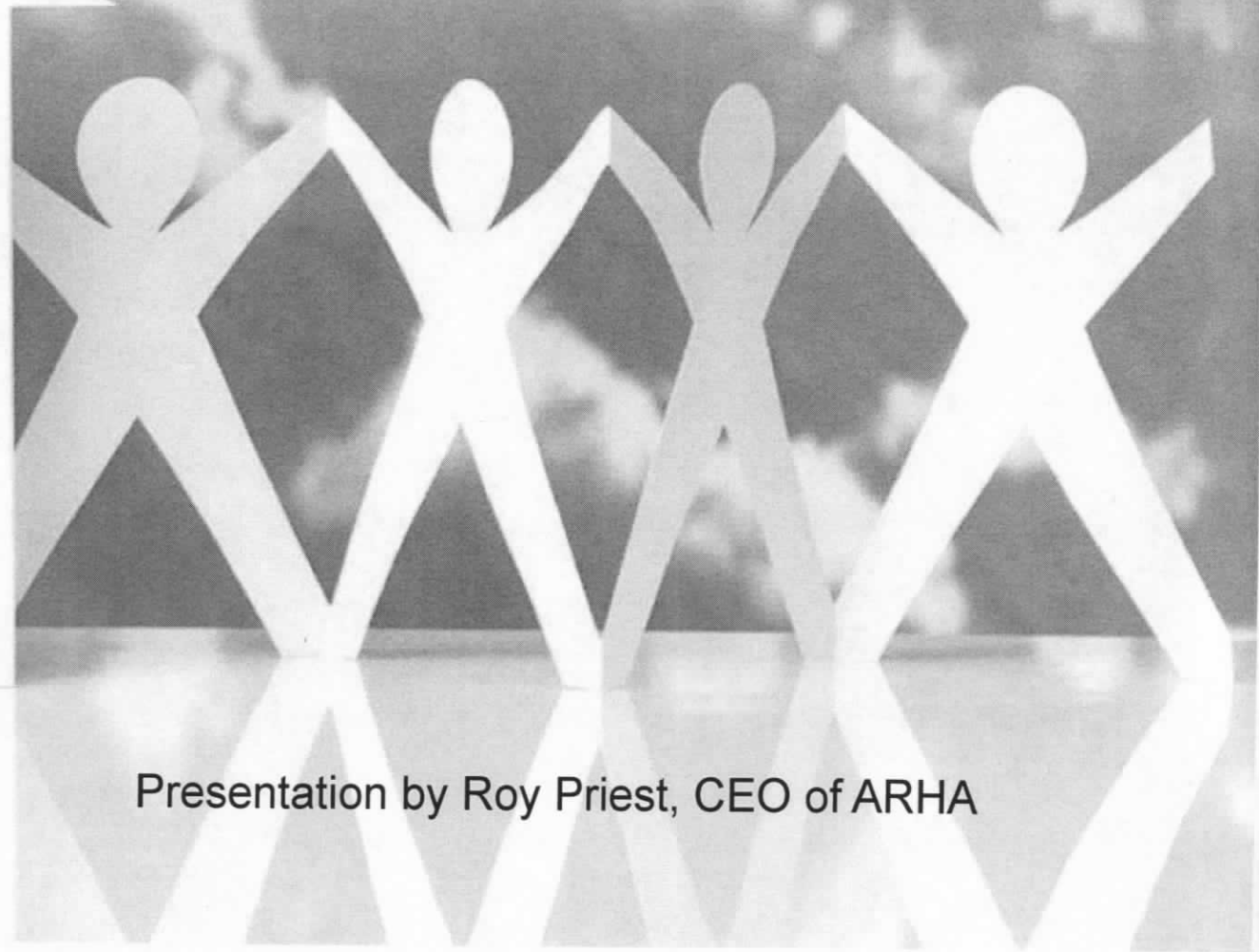
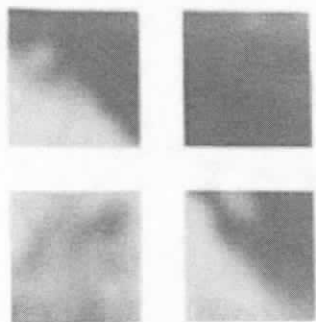
I would submit that this is an unfortunately good example of what has come to be called "demolition by neglect." Stop maintaining property—the thought goes—get it good and run down, and then complain it will be too costly to renovate and thus advocate to tear it down.

ARHA has known of the historic nature of these properties for as long as the Parker Gray Historic District has been in existence. ARHA thus has had a fiduciary duty to properly maintain and care for these properties; if it has failed to do so, it should not benefit from its' neglect.

Roy Priest  
9-12-15

# RAMSEY HOMES

City Council Public Hearing, 9/12/2015



Presentation by Roy Priest, CEO of ARHA

# Why Are We Here?

- ARHA's Strategic Goals include a commitment to house its residents in sanitary, healthy and modern conditions.
- We hired a team of design and construction professionals to study this property as it relates to:
  - Life Safety
  - Accessibility
  - Functionality

Their work indicated that, in order to rehabilitate the units and bring them up to code, providing modest, modern amenities, the rehabilitation cost would exceed 90% of the cost of new construction.

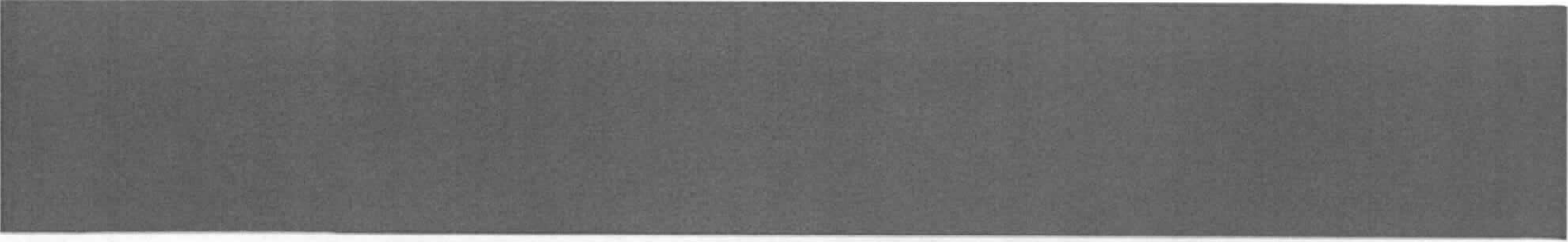
# Why Are We Here?

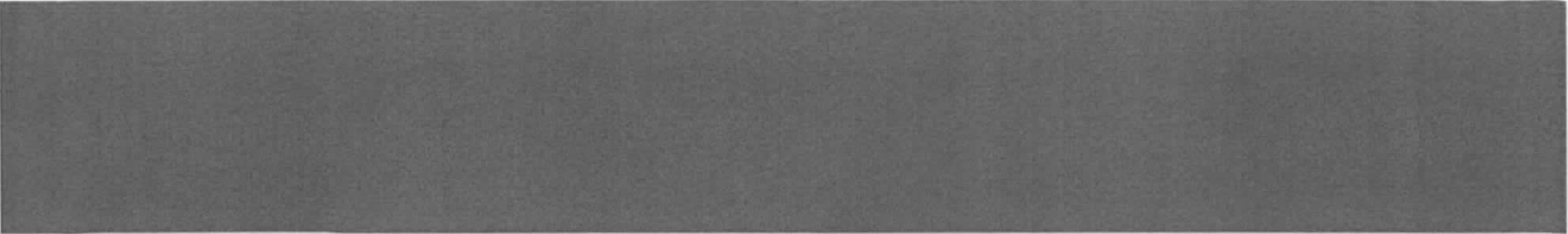
- Property does not meet minimum HUD standards, therefore is at risk of losing its operating subsidies.
- Per the project architect, even with substantial rehabilitation the existing units cannot fully meet (HUD) 504 accessibility codes
- A 1946 article that announced that the City had an opportunity to purchase the war housing units quoted the mayor as saying, the emergency homes do not conform with the city building codes. This continues to be true for the homes and, therefore, federal and/or state-based development funds would be limited in any kind of renovation effort.
- In order to be competitive for tax credit funding the units must not be obsolete, must offer current amenities (washer/dryer, AC, dishwashers) and must be competitive with comparable properties (marketable) in order to attract investors to purchase the credits.

## Alternatives to Demolition Were Considered

- For more than a year, the ARHA Board and staff has given deliberate, serious consideration to several options for this site, including rehabilitation.
- ARHA has expended resources to study different rehabilitation, and new construction models.
- ARHA engaged Wetlands Studies, one of the most respected historic and archeological consulting firms in the region, with extensive experience in Alexandria to perform an exhaustive study of the history.
- A rehabilitation to bring the structures up to current codes would result in the loss of all exterior walls, modification of the roof structure, would expand the building footprint, potentially making the property ineligible for Historic Tax Credits.



- 
- With respect to funding options for a rehabilitation effort, ARHA conferred with an attorney who routinely uses Historic Tax Credits in his practice.
  - The combination of the high cost to rehabilitate, along with the small size of the transaction and the tax exempt issues, would make this a very difficult transaction to close.

- 
- In the words of the attorney, as much as we might wish smaller deals were easier to do than larger deals, the tax and deal issues are the same, just in a smaller package.
  - The Board has concluded that the only viable, sustainable option is demolition and redevelopment.

# Original Public Housing Design

- Enacted as law, the 1937 US Housing Act, with the objective of providing affordable housing to the poorer segments of the population, provided stringent new cost guidelines to public housing projects that led to an *increased emphasis on economy* and greater standardization in American public housing.
- *Spartan utilitarian design* characterized the interior spaces of the individual residential units. Units included one to four bedrooms, a kitchen, living room, and bathroom.
- Room sizes were minimal and the shapes generally regular. Walls were most often painted concrete block or plaster partitions; floors typically asphalt tile or linoleum over concrete, with the occasional use of wood parquet where costs and availability permitted.
- Units included (modern) conveniences; a gas range and electric refrigerator in the kitchens and full bathrooms.

(Robinson et al: 1999a: 19-20).

**THE CONDITION OF THE 70-YEAR OLD PROPERTY IS A RESULT OF THEIR ORIGINAL DESIGN, AND LIMITED FEDERAL CAPITAL FUNDS.**

# Spartan Utilitarian Design



# Kitchen





# Utility area open to Kitchen





# Wall hung lavatories



# Inadequate heating



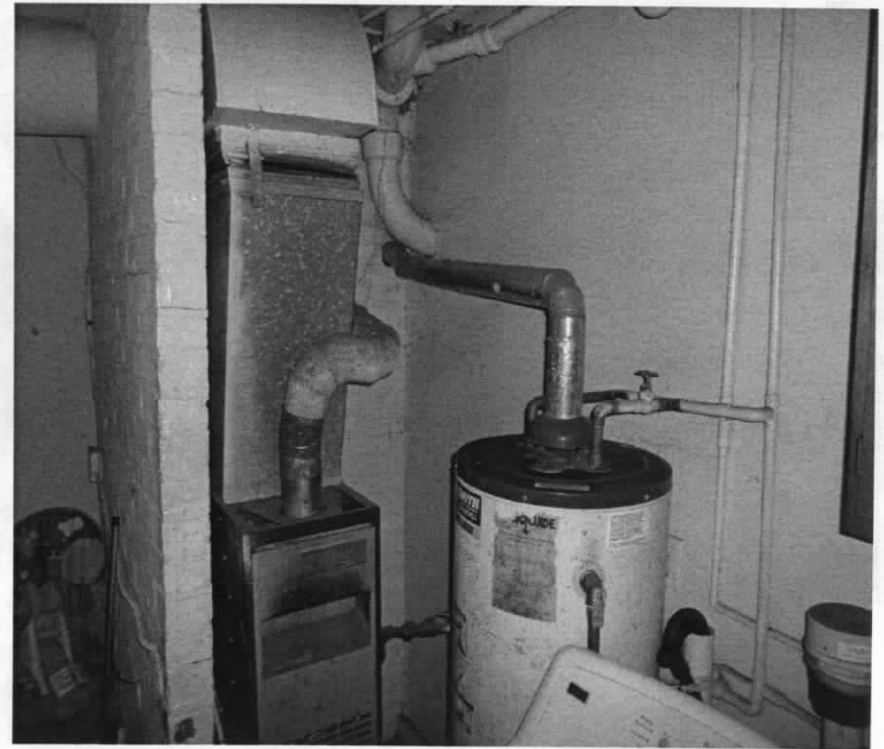
**Closets are 2' in width with no doors**



# Photos of Ramsey Homes



# Pantry Open to Kitchen





**The buildings/landscape out-of-scale in the neighborhood. Their density, setback, massing, design, and entrances which mostly face each other rather than Patrick Street are incongruent with their neighbors**





# Community Property Values

- The post-1931 Ramsey Homes are “background, Later Buildings” and are not compatible with and detract from the neighboring pre-1932 “Early Buildings”.
- Most of the homes on Pendleton and Patrick are considered Early Buildings.
- The buildings and landscape are out-of-scale in the neighborhood. Their density, setback, massing, design, and entrances which mostly face each other rather than Patrick Street are incongruent with their neighbors.
- Within or on the perimeter of a 500-foot radius is open space located at: the Henry, the Asher, the Bel Pre, Charles Houston Recreation Center and the public park at the new Old Town Commons.

# Denial of the Permit to Demolish

- HUD is unlikely to continue to approve operating subsidy for a property that is not financially feasible.
- ARHA could be faced with the possibility of relocating the residents and discontinuing the use of the property as subsidized rental housing.

# 86% of the Residents of Ramsey Homes Favor Demolition and Redevelopment

August 9, 2015

Honorable Mayor Euille and City Council Members  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: Ramsey Homes Redevelopment

Honorable Mayor Euille and Members of the City Council:

We are writing to you as the affected residents of Ramsey Homes, respectfully asking that the Alexandria City Council approve the demolition and redevelopment of the Ramsey Homes. We have a profound love for our community, and deep social and family bonds, some going back several generations. We desire to remain and thrive in, as well contribute to, the City of Alexandria. We are workers, tax-payers, friends, voters and neighbors. We want what every parent and citizen of Alexandria wants; self-sufficiency, respect and opportunities for our children. Further, we do not believe our homes are historic in character and we simply would like to have the same amenities afforded to our neighbors at the Berg, and James Bland in the course of those redevelopment efforts.

The redevelopment of the Ramsey Homes will enable us to make important strides towards our objectives and allow us to continue being productive members of the Alexandria community. The current state of the Ramsey Homes is an impediment to our advancement and productivity. This is not due to the inability of ARHA to manage and maintain the property but because of a lack of adequate federal, state and local funding for capital improvements as well as operations.

Despite the City's declared goals of preserving and developing affordable housing, in recent years the East Braddock community in which we live has become unaffordable to low- and moderate-income families. Redevelopment of the Ramsey Homes will allow us to sustain essential community and family bonds, access to public transit and therefore our employment, and keep our children enrolled in their current schools and extra-curricular activities. Redeveloping the Ramsey Homes into a new, healthy and mixed-income community will improve our quality of life, as well as benefit our neighbors and the larger Alexandria community.

We respectfully ask that you support the redevelopment of the Ramsey Homes and vote on September 12, 2015 to overturn the Board of Architectural Review's decision to deny the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority's Permit to Demolish the Ramsey Homes. We further ask that, should you allow the demolition, that you approve the zoning request that will come before you in November of this year. We have met with ARHA on a regular basis regarding this matter and are excited about the plans for the redevelopment. It is up to you as the City leadership to make these plans come to fruition.

Thank you for your indulgence and we look forward to hearing your decision on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September.

[SIGNATURES ON NEXT PAGE]

Sincerely,

Residents of the Ramsey Homes Community

Margaret Swadlow Marking

Ona Valher

Mary Lewis

Shanina Todd

Wanda Smith

Syllina Hurd

Teresa Jackson

Sandra Harris

Elsie Pulliam

Margaret Norcross

Bonita Williams

Lashanya Lynn

***...we don't believe our homes  
are historic.....***

*...We are workers, tax payers, friends, voters and neighbors. We want what every parent and citizen of Alexandria wants; self-sufficiency, respect and opportunity for our children.....*

*...We simply want the same amenities afforded to our neighbors at the Berg and James Bland.....*

## Jackie Henderson

---

**From:** eugene.johnsonjr@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 12, 2015 9:01 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton  
**Subject:** Call.Click.Connect. #81011: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council To All, That has an Intrest Please Recon

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 81011.

### Request Details:

- Name: Eugene W. Johnson Jr.
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703-400-2058
- Email: [eugene.johnsonjr@yahoo.com](mailto:eugene.johnsonjr@yahoo.com)
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: To All, That has an Intrest Please Reconsider not tearing down the Ramsey Homes. This plays a Big part in the Afro American History, So please dont tear them down, Please preserve them. Thank You God Bless.
- Expected Response Date: Monday, September 21

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at the *Call.Click.Connect.* staff interface.

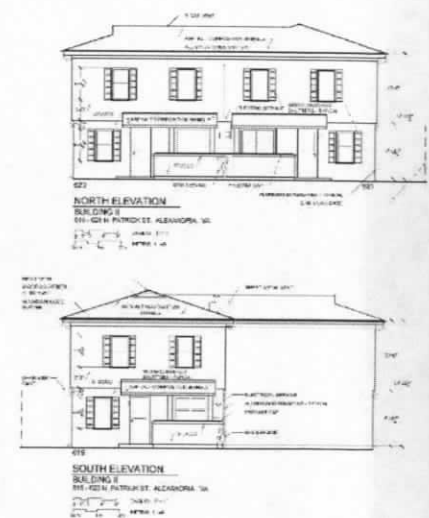
If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact [CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov](mailto:CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov) or call 703.746.HELP.

This is an automated email notification of a *Call.Click.Connect.* request. Please do not reply to this email.

Anna Maas  
9-12-15

## RAMSEY HOMES

### LANHAM ACT ALEXANDRIA DEFENSE HOUSING PROJECT VA 44133



Prepared by  
David Carroll, M.A., Anna Maas, MUEP, and Boyd Sipe, M.A., RPA





# Qualifications

Founded in 1981, **Thunderbird Archeology** has over 30 years of experience on thousands of projects in Northern Virginia, including 30 projects in the City of Alexandria. In 2004, **Wetlands Studies and Solutions, Inc.** acquired Thunderbird formalizing an unofficial relationship that dated back more than a decade. Together, we are the leading natural and cultural resources consultant in the Mid-Atlantic region and have received numerous national and regional awards in environmental conservation, engineering, and archeology.

**Mr. Boyd Sipe, M.A., RPA**, Principal Archeologist and Project Manager  
Bernard Brenman Award Recipient for Outstanding Archaeologist, City of Alexandria, 2013  
M.A., Archaeology and Heritage with Distinction, University of Leicester, England, 2009

Mr. Sipe specializes in cultural resource management in the Middle Atlantic region. He has conducted all phases of archeological research for Section 106 compliance projects as well as those required for county comprehensive plans or proffers and local ordinances. Mr. Sipe's responsibilities include archival and historic documentary research, the supervision of archeological field crews and architectural historians, and the authoring of reports associated with historic and archeological research and field work. His dissertation focused on contextual interpretation of archeological sites associated with antebellum slavery in the rural Chesapeake. Mr. Sipe actively presents the results of his research at various public venues, including professional archeological conferences and local historical societies, and most recently presented the results of the Archeological Removal of Human Remains from Harmony Cemetery in Washington D.C. at the 2015 Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference.

**Mr. David Carroll, M.A.**, Associate Archeologist and Historian  
Master of Historical Archeology with Distinction, University of Leicester, England, 2015  
Bachelor of Arts in History, Shepherd College, West Virginia, 1995

Mr. Carroll has over 15 years of field experience in Middle Atlantic archeology, including fieldwork on sites ranging from the Archaic period to the early 20th Century. After 12 years as a Field Supervisor, he has gained proficiency in overseeing fieldwork on Phase I, II, and III investigations, documentary research, and the writing and production of technical reports and mapping with AutoCAD. He also has served as acting archeological lab supervisor, performing lab analysis and the processing and interpretation of artifacts.

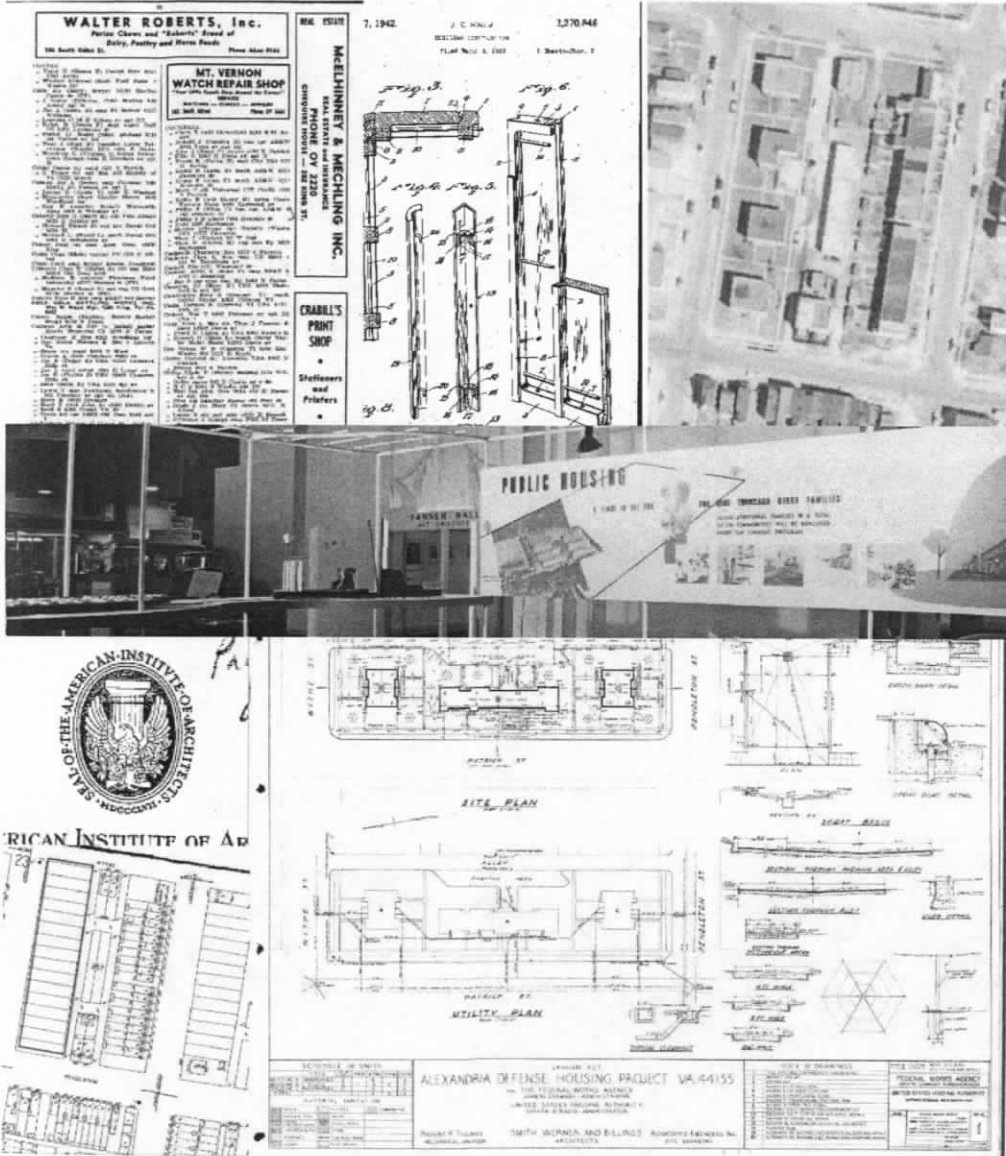
**Ms. Anna Maas, MUEP**, Principal Architectural Historian  
Certified Zoning Official, Virginia Association of Zoning Officials, 2014  
M.U.E.P., Urban and Environmental Planning, University of Virginia, 2003  
Graduate Certificate, Historic Preservation, University of Virginia, 2003  
B.A.H., Architectural History, University of Virginia, 2000  
Minor of Architecture, University of Virginia, 2000

Ms. Maas specializes in the history of vernacular and high-style American architecture and landscape architecture from the Federal Period to the Recent Past and in the history of land use, planning and zoning, and minority rights in the context of the built environment. She has studied under influential leaders in these fields, including Julian Bond.

Prior to consulting, she began her career at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the City of Charlottesville. Among many notable projects, she contributed to the Master Plan of Petersburg Park in Louisville, Kentucky by working with planners and the public to protect and interpret the cultural history of the historic African-American community of Petersburg and its early freeman cemetery. She similarly contributed to the River Road Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan in Louisville, focusing not only on country estates, but the pockets of African-American and German-immigrant communities around them and their supporting infrastructure, including a Rosenwald School. The project received the 2011 Outstanding Plan Award from the Kentucky Chapter of the American Planning Association.

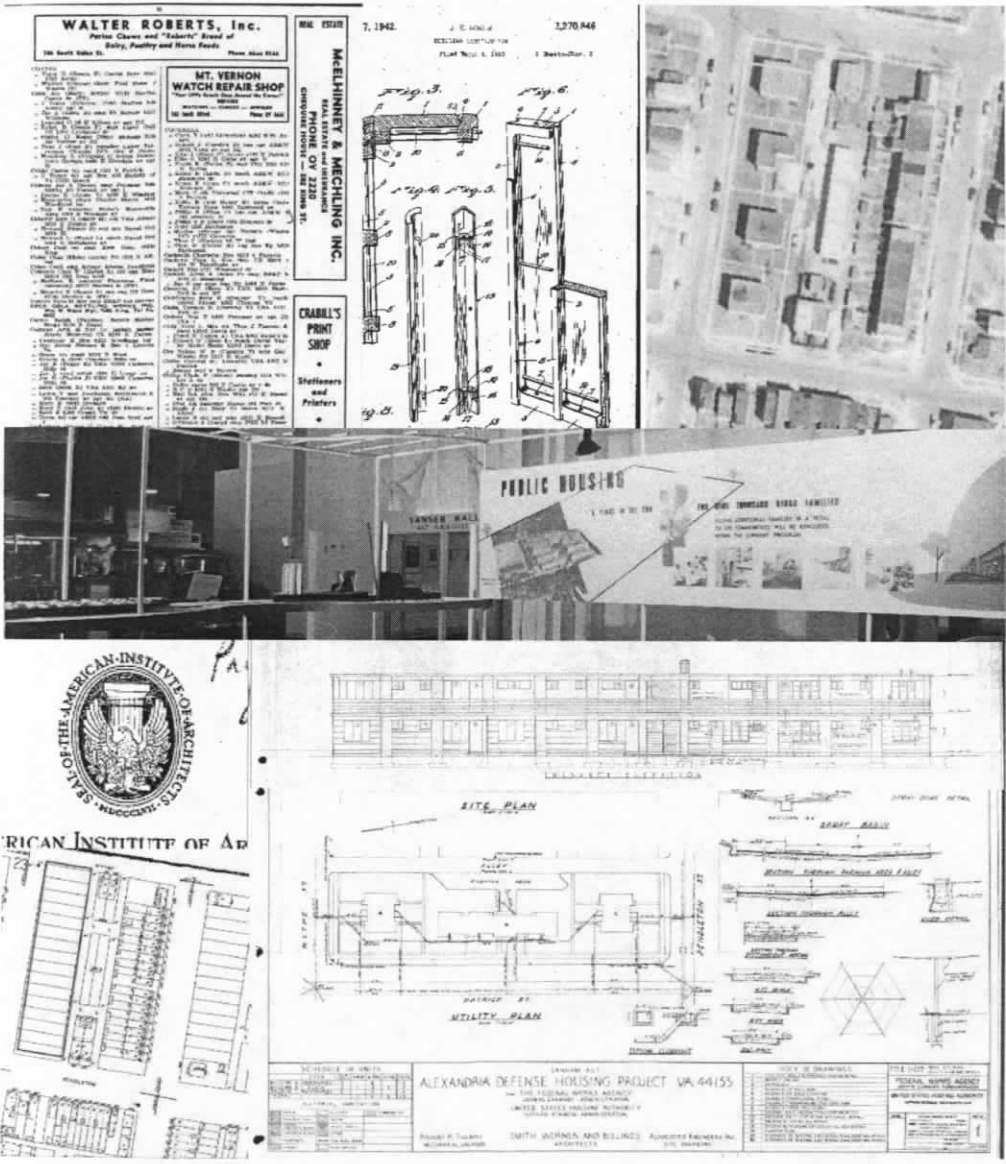
Ms. Maas volunteers extensively with local non-profits, regularly advocates for the preservation of threatened resources, and has served on the boards of the Louisville Historical League, Preservation Kentucky, Preservation Action in Washington, D.C., and the Warrenton, Virginia Architectural Review Board.

All senior staff have qualifications that exceed the Secretary of Interior's Standards for archeology, architectural history, and/or history.



# Research

- The Office of Alexandria Archaeology
- The Alexandria Archives and Records Center
- The Alexandria Courthouse
- The Alexandria Library, Barrett Branch (Special Collections)
- The Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority Records
- The American Institute of Architects Archives
- Fort Ward Museum, Alexandria
- Historical Newspaper Archives
- The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Library, Washington, D.C.
- The Jackie Robinson Foundation
- John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library, Williamsburg
- Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- Library of Virginia, Richmond
- National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials Records
- The National Archives at College Park, Maryland – the Records of the Federal Works Agency (FWA) and the Public Housing Administration (PHA)
- The National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- The Nimitz Library and Navy Department Library
- Oral Histories, 20th-Century Occupants of Public Housing in Alexandria
- Tuskegee University Archives, Department of Records and Research
- United States Census Records
- United States Patent and Trademark Office Records
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources



# Research Results

The only constant of the property is change, an evolution with an interesting pattern not readily apparent.

- Pre-1861 Vacant land/farmland
- 1861-1865 Military housing/hospital during the Civil War for Union Army
- 1865-1914 Affordable housing for European immigrant tenants
- 1914-1941 Vacant land
- 1942-1945 Military housing during World War II for African Americans
- 1946- Affordable housing for the public

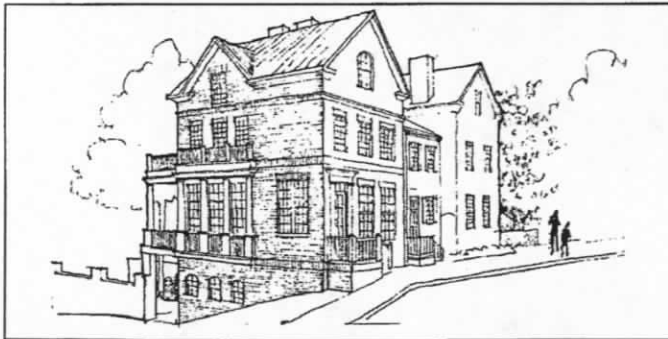
The project was planned and constructed quickly.

- 1938-1940 Delos H. Smith, Billings, Werner Associates designed at least 440 other units valued at almost \$2,000,000 for the U.S. Housing Authority, indicating that Ramsey Homes was not unique among their projects.
- July 10, 1941 Architects submit first set of plans for Ramsey Homes.
- Oct 15, 1941 Architects submit final set of plans after value engineering.
- Nov 22, 1941 Construction contract awarded.
- Jul 31, 1942 Project was 95% complete.
- Oct 2, 1942 Project was 99% complete at a cost of \$79,940.
- Nov 30, 1942 Units were partially occupied.
- Apr 30, 1953 ARHA purchased units.
- By 1970s Stucco and walled patios added; window placement and roof lines changed.
- By 1995 Original trees, plants, paved playground, fences, and clotheslines removed; windows and doors replaced.

# Establishment of the Parker-Gray District and Guidelines



Proposal for a new three story brick apartment building.  
SOURCE: 109-111 South West Street, BAR Case #91-170, John Savage, Architect, P.C.



Perspective view of new townhouse in relation to existing adjacent residential structures.  
SOURCE: 700 South Lee Street, BAR Case #90-176, Robert Morris, Morris Damm, Inc., Architects

## CHAPTER 6

### NEW CONSTRUCTION - RESIDENTIAL

*Ramsey Homes do not comply with the Design Guidelines in Style, Massing, Width, Siting, Spacing, Roof Lines or Building Orientation.*

*Parker-Gray District was established to protect community health and safety and to promote the education, prosperity and general welfare of the public through the identification, preservation, and enhancement of buildings, structures, settings, features and ways of life which characterize this nineteenth [1800-1899] and early twentieth century [1900-1931] residential neighborhood.*

Article X. Section 10-201 of the Zoning Ordinance  
CODIFIED 1984

Adopted in 1993, the Design Guidelines emphasize respecting the Style, Massing, Height, Width, Siting, Spacing, Roof Lines and Building Orientation of historic resources on adjacent blocks, which in the case of Ramsey Homes, largely pre-date 1932.

*[Amended in December 2012], A local period of architectural significance was adopted in order to prioritize buildings. Each residential property will be evaluated based on its original construction date. For Early buildings, those buildings constructed before 1932, the BAR expressed a preference for preservation or reproduction of the exterior building materials, especially on their street facing elevations. **Buildings constructed after 1931 are considered Later buildings** and will have more limited BAR review. The BAR generally considers these background buildings and recommended much greater flexibility for alterations and new construction, while insuring that Later buildings remain compatible with, and do not detract from, nearby Early buildings.*

Memo from the City Manager to the Mayor & City Council, March 18, 2013

# Comparison of Historic Districts

## **"PARKER-GRAY DISTRICT"**

1984 – Alexandria Local Zoning Ordinance No. 2960 Codified  
1986 – Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Appointed  
1993 – "Design Guidelines for the Old and Historic Alexandria District  
& Parker-Gray District" Adopted by Both BARs  
2012 – Parker-Gray Design Guidelines Amended by Parker-Gray BAR

### **PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TO EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY [1800 TO 1931]

### **REGULATIONS:**

ADHERE TO DESIGN GUIDELINES, AS AMENDED (2012)

EARLY BUILDINGS (BEFORE 1932)

— "Preservation or Reproduction" Preferred

LATER BUILDINGS (AFTER 1931)

— "Limited BAR Review"

— "Background Buildings"

— "recommended much greater flexibility"

— "remain compatible with, and do not detract from, nearby Early buildings"

## **"UPTOWN/PARKER-GRAY HISTORIC DISTRICT"**

2006 – Reconnaissance Survey Occurred  
2008 – Virginia Landmarks Register District Listed  
2010 – National Register of Historic Places District Listed

### **PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

CIRCA 1810 TO 1959

### **REGULATIONS:**

DOES NOT REQUIRE CONFORMANCE TO DESIGN GUIDELINES.

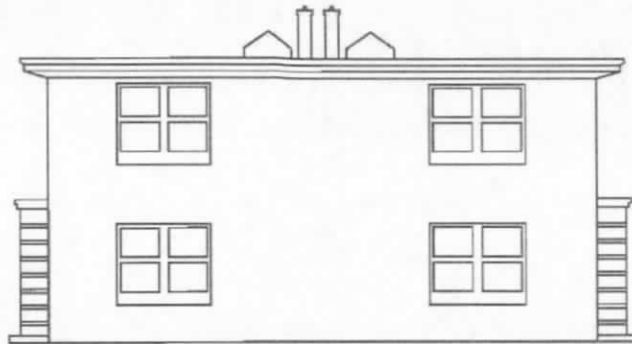
DOES NOT PREVENT DEMOLITION.

**Period of Significance (POS)** – span of time in which a property attained the significance for which it meets the National Register or Local Zoning criteria.

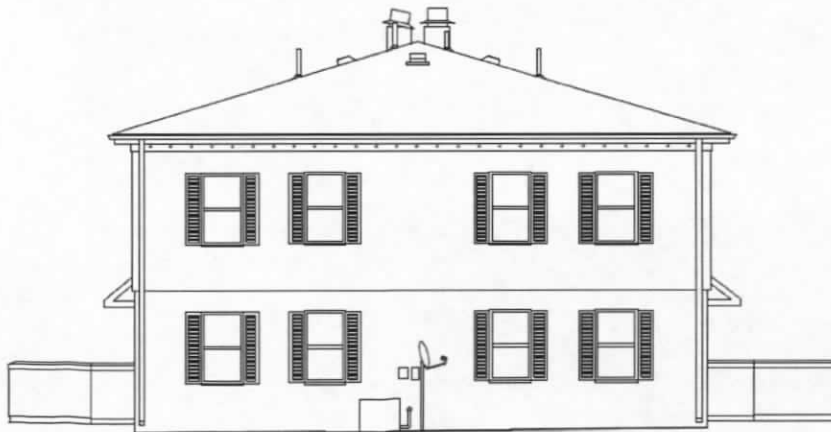
**Integrity** – authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's Period of Significance.



## EAST & WEST ELEVATIONS



1942



2015

## Criterion 1

*Is the building or structure of such architectural or historic interest that its removal would be to the detriment of the public interest?*

The buildings are not of such architectural or historic interest that their removal will be a detriment to the public interest, because the buildings and garden apartment landscape were altered so dramatically by the 1970s that they do not reflect their POS (1941-1942), the Modernist economy with which they were built, or for what they were built. The buildings and the landscape design have lost integrity of design, setting, feeling, and association due to the alteration of style and landscape.

In 1942, three four-unit Modernist foursquares and a three-unit L-shaped building within a complex landscape had the following:

- Minimalistic design elements
- Exposed concrete block exterior walls
- Coal chutes to the furnaces on the east and west walls
- Coupled windows on the east and west walls
- Small entry stoops on the north and south elevations
- Flat roofs
- Skylights over the bathrooms
- Paved playground, hexagonal clothes lines, chain-linked fence, English ivy, evergreens, and hardwood trees between buildings

There are now four buildings with a hodgepodge of Prairie and Colonial Revival elements marred by constant alterations, some of which were approved by the BAR and a landscape with no trace of the plants, fences, playground, and clotheslines of its era.



## NORTH & SOUTH ELEVATIONS



1942



2015

## Criterion 2

*Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into an historic shrine?*

The buildings do not merit becoming a shrine because they have lost integrity of design, do not reflect their Period of Significance, nor do they convey the original purpose as wartime housing.

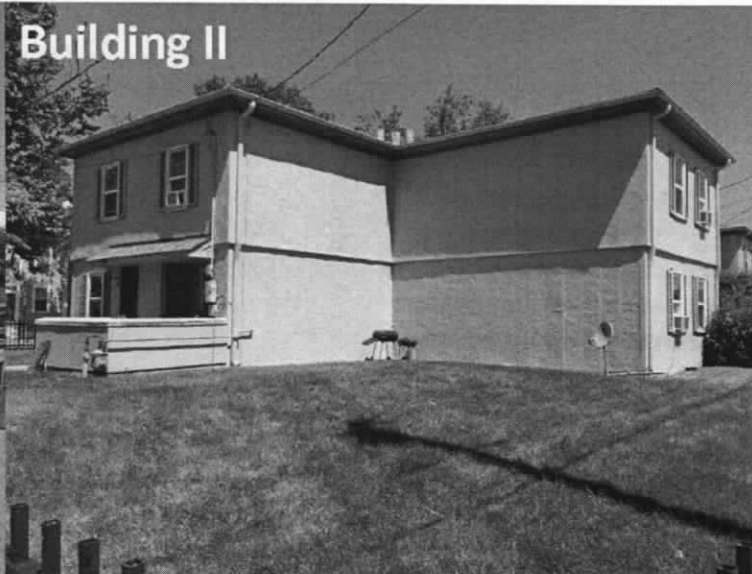
This is not an exceptional design and not reflective of its era or function. All visible features were modified and date to around the 1970s or 1990s, including the following:

- Hipped roof
- Stucco
- Walled patio
- Shed roofs over porches
- Doors
- Placement of windows
- Decorative shutters
- Metal picket fence
- Open grassy lawns
- Plantings around units
- Trees along sidewalk

Building I



Building II



Building III



Building IV



## Criterion 3

*Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?*

The foursquare with Prairie features is not unusual and is ubiquitous in American cities from the 1910s through the 1940s. Adapted to this style by the 1970s, this is a very late and poor example, not original to the site. The buildings are not so old and unusual or uncommon that they could not be easily reproduced. They are constructed of mass-produced materials and measured drawings and specifications are available.





Hall of Fame at Charles H. Houston Recreation Center, Funded by ARHA  
(<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/>)



City of Alexandria Contraband and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial  
Historic Site Brochure Designed by Thunderbird Archeology

## Criterion 5

*Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage and making the city a more attractive and desirable place to live?*

Retention of the buildings will not promote general welfare because its declining condition may decrease neighboring real estate values and the residents' quality of life. Their removal will result in a more attractive block, more desirable place to live, and a higher quality of life for current residents.

The lack of density also contributes to As scholar and urbanist Jane Jacobs notes, increased density and entrances oriented toward Patrick Street will put more "eyes on the street" and a greater connection to the community.

Retention will generate less business because there will be fewer residents to patronize local venues and learn, live, and work in the area.

The buildings do not convey what they were or offer inherent or visual educational opportunities to non-professional historians.

The introduction of more housing units in the vicinity of the local museum and community center will expose more residents to local American history.



## Criterion 6

*Would retention of the building or structure help maintain the scale and character of the neighborhood?*

The post-1931 Ramsey Homes are “background Later Buildings” and are not compatible with and detract from the neighboring pre-1932 “Early Buildings”.

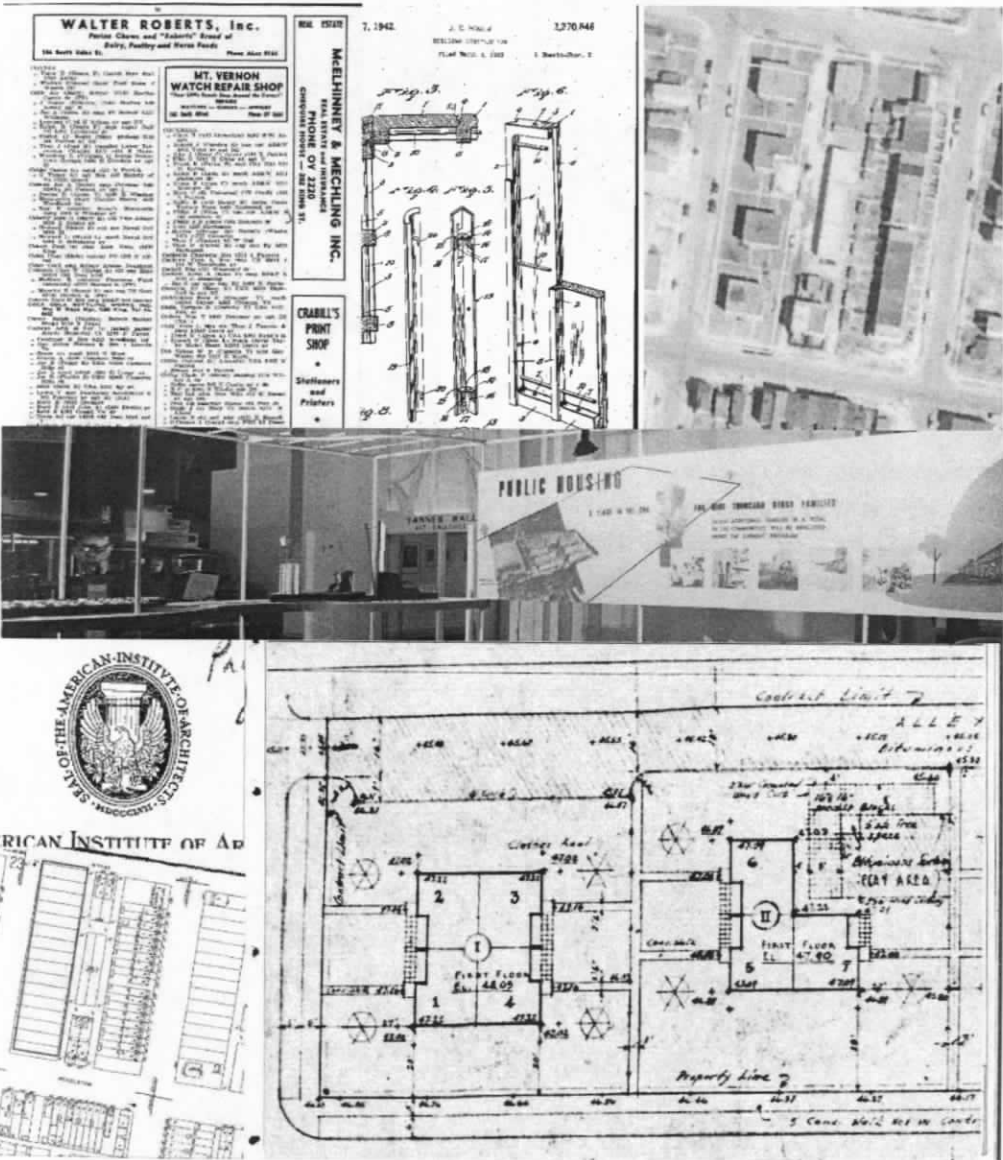
The buildings and landscape are out-of-scale in the neighborhood. Their density, setback, massing, design, and entrances which mostly face each other rather than Patrick Street are incongruent with their neighbors.

Their demolition would allow for buildings in keeping with the BAR Design Guidelines and the neighborhood in Style, Massing, Width, Siting, Spacing, Roof Lines or Building Orientation.









# Conclusion

Since settlement, the Project area's land use has constantly evolved from vacant land to farmland (pre-1849) to military housing and hospital during the Civil War for the Union Army (1861-1865) to affordable tenant housing for European immigrants (1865-1914) to vacant land (1914-1941) to military housing during World War II for African Americans (1942-1953) and finally to affordable housing for the public (1953-present).

Appropriate commemoration of Ramsey Homes is continuing the legacy of public housing with the introduction of more units within this block. Preservation of the resource is not absolutely necessary as there is ample opportunity for public interpretation. In our opinion, the addition of more housing in this vital neighborhood in concert with interpretation would be appropriate mitigation for loss of the resource.


The possibilities for such mitigation are broad, and retention of the Ramsey Homes buildings offers fewer opportunities to celebrate and inform the public about the social history of this property from its settlement through the construction of the Ramsey Homes and what it was like during wartime and segregation in the city.

The social history is not fostered by the retention of the buildings and structures.




Dedication of Hall of Fame at Charles H. Houston Recreation Center, June 22, 2013, Funded by Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com>)


## People Cemetery



*Young scholars at Prince Street Contraband Barracks, circa 1864 (Photograph Courtesy of New York Public Library)*

The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial commemorates the men, women, and children for whom the cemetery serves as their final resting place and all African Americans who sought freedom, refuge and a better life in Alexandria during the American Civil War and the years that followed.

Learn about the lives, work, and struggles of the Contrabands and Freedmen in History: Alexandria   
[www.alexandriava.gov/freedmenMemorial/People](http://www.alexandriava.gov/freedmenMemorial/People)




*Burials at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery were marked with wooden headboards like these at Alexandria National Cemetery (Photograph Courtesy of Library of Congress)*

The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial, located at the intersection of South Washington Street and Church Street in Old Town Alexandria, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the earliest documented African American burial ground in the city.

The U.S. Army Quartermaster Department established the cemetery in 1864 to bury African Americans, most of whom fled slavery during and after the Civil War. Referred to as contrabands, and later, freedmen, these freedom-seekers sought refuge and opportunity Union-occupied Alexandria. After the War, the Freedmen's Bureau operated the cemetery until 1869. A record book preserves the names of 1,711 African Americans who are buried here, including 118 African American soldiers. As a result of one of the earliest civil rights protests, these men were disinterred and reburied at Alexandria National Cemetery in 1865.

After 1869, unrecorded burials and maintenance may have occurred. However, within a quarter century, graves were desecrated. Few remembered the burial ground after construction of buildings, streets, and the Capital Beltway. City historians and archaeologists rediscovered the cemetery in the 1980s. With the advocacy of the Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery, this sacred place has been preserved and honored by the City of Alexandria as the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial.



[www.alexandriava.gov/freedmenMemorial](http://www.alexandriava.gov/freedmenMemorial)

Alexandria Archaeology Museum  
 Torpedo Factory Art Center 327  
 105 North Union Street  
 Alexandria VA 22314  
[alexandriava.gov/Archaeology](http://alexandriava.gov/Archaeology)  
[archaeology@alexandriava.gov](mailto:archaeology@alexandriava.gov)

The Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery  
 902 Wythe Street  
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
[www.FreedmensCemetery.org](http://www.FreedmensCemetery.org)


Alexandria Black History Museum  
 638 North Alfred Street  
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
[alexandriava.gov/blackhistory](http://alexandriava.gov/blackhistory)

Other imagery from top:  
 1. Alexandria, Virginia. Slave pen. Enslaved since circa 1861-1869 (Library of Congress)  
 2. A Ride for Liberty - The Fugitive Slave (Eastman Johnson, ca. 1862; Brooklyn Museum of Art)  
 3. Military Burial in the Alexandria National Cemetery (Western Reserve Historical Society)


This material is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

## Archaeology

Archaeological investigations at the cemetery were conducted to ensure that all graves would be preserved during development of the Memorial. Significant archaeological discoveries at the site include the identification of 541 graves, evidence of a cemetery lane, and oyster shells scattered over some graves, which may represent the continuity of a traditional practice. The investigation also found a significant Native American site and Alexandria's oldest artifact, a Clovis spear point that could date as early as 13,000 years ago.

Discover the results of the archaeological investigations to find and protect the graves: [www.alexandriava.gov/freedmenMemorial/Archaeology](http://www.alexandriava.gov/freedmenMemorial/Archaeology) 

## Contrabands & Freedmen Cemetery Memorial

Study the cemetery records and historical research: <http://alexandriava.gov/freedmenMemorial/Cemetery> 

**1001**  
 South Washington Street  
 Alexandria, Virginia

City of Alexandria Contraband and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial Historic Site Brochure  
 Designed by Thunderbird Archeology.



Mitigation for Demolition of the Frederick Douglass Elementary School in Loudoun County, Virginia included Student-Conducted Oral History Research and a Memorial Exhibit

## Jackie Henderson

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**From:** Justin Wilson  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 12, 2015 4:41 PM  
**To:** Jackie Henderson  
**Subject:** Fwd: Historic Alexandria Foundation re: Historic Tax Credits and LIHTC

FYI

----

Justin M. Wilson, Member  
Alexandria City Council  
Office: [703.746.4500](tel:703.746.4500)  
Home: [703.299.1576](tel:703.299.1576)  
[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Townley McElhiney <[tmcelhiney@verizon.net](mailto:tmcelhiney@verizon.net)>  
**Date:** September 12, 2015 at 8:41:33 AM EDT  
**To:** Justin Wilson <[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)>, Gail Rothrock <[gcrothrock@gmail.com](mailto:gcrothrock@gmail.com)>  
**Cc:** Penny Jones <[pennyjones1@verizon.net](mailto:pennyjones1@verizon.net)>, Elliot Bell-Krasner <[ebk2020@gmail.com](mailto:ebk2020@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Historic Alexandria Foundation re: Historic Tax Credits and LIHTC

Justin and all:

My response to ARHA's comments; please see below in red.

Thank you,

Townley

**From:** [Justin Wilson](#)  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 12, 2015 12:24 AM  
**To:** [Townley McElhiney](#) ; [Gail Rothrock](#)  
**Cc:** [Penny Jones](#) ; [Elliot Bell-Krasner](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Historic Alexandria Foundation re: Historic Tax Credits and LIHTC

Townley,

From ARHA:

First I have over 35 years of experience as a preservationist and an architectural historian nominating properties, districts, multiple properties within whole cities to the National Register of Historic places. I sat on a BAR for 4 years and a State Historic Preservation Office's Committee on the Registers (deciding National, state and local significance of the above NR-eligible buildings, etc.) for 5 years. All of these NR properties included various building types, landscapes, archaeology, and other notable features.

"for properties that are within historic districts, NPS must individually determine whether they "contribute" to the district's significance, meaning they are representative of the district's historical development and/or architecture and have not been altered over time.

The Ramsey Homes by being listed as "contributing" buildings to the Parker-Gray Historic District are already listed in the National Register (housed in the National Park Service/Dept. of Interior). The complex is eligible to be listed in the NR separately as its own entity for "local significance;" the complex meets 3 of the 4 NR eligibility requirements.

Our history consultant believes that they have been so significantly altered that they will not be found to individually contribute and thus would not qualify for credits. Additionally, City staff has confirmed that a reasonable rehabilitation would require "bump outs" and our counsel has advised us that the National Park Service rules would prohibit you from expanding the footprint of the building. Any such expansion would need to be fully explained in the filings you make with the Virginia SHPO and the National Park Service (the "Part 2 Application"), and in his opinion, it would be unlikely to be approved.

I disagree; in all my years of practical experience and currently as an editorial member for the Historic Preservation pages of the National Institute of Building Science's Whole Building Design Guide in DC, I have seen much, much worse in conditions and alterations that have become Federal tax credit projects.

Your counsel is wrong. In my recent consultation with the Director of Arlington County's Preservation Program, the Federal and State tax credits were applied to Buckingham Villages; in that case they bumped out a new bedroom and bathroom in the structures. Talking to an NPS Tax Credit specialist, there are bump outs in many national tax credit projects across the country.

Also, given that the rehab of 2 buildings is being estimated at \$1.2MM and the tax credits are only available in an amount equal to 20 percent of "qualified expenditures"; this is a small amount given the transaction costs, the cost of administration and ongoing compliance.



A number of people have looked at ARHA's numbers for rehabilitating the Ramsey Homes and find them extremely high!

We will be undertaking a Section 106 review and it is during that process that DHR will make that evaluation based on our consultant's recommendation.

Unfortunately the ARHA consultant was not a preservation architect nor an architectural historian; an archaeology firm generally has limited experience with the nuances that the Ramsey House project entails.

I hope this helps. We did not take demolition lightly and truly did try to investigate the available options."

Thank you for giving me this chance to reply to ARHA's comments!

-----  
Justin M. Wilson, Member  
Alexandria City Council  
Office: 703.746.4500  
Home: 703.299.1576  
[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)

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**From:** Townley McElhiney <[tmcelhiney@verizon.net](mailto:tmcelhiney@verizon.net)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2015 1:22 PM  
**To:** Justin Wilson; Gail Rothrock  
**Cc:** Penny Jones; Elliot Bell-Krasner  
**Subject:** Historic Alexandria Foundation re: Historic Tax Credits and LIHTC

Good morning, Justin:

Thank you so much for spending time with us yesterday; it was a pleasure to meet with you. You gave us good questions and problems to consider!

I have been in conversation with HUD offices and the National Park Service (NPS) today. One can combine Low Income Tax Credits (HUD-LIHTC) with Federal Tax Credits (NPS) and State Tax Credits from the VA Dept. of Historic Resources (VDHR). Please see accompanying report which is hot off the press having been released yesterday! "Pairing Historic Tax Credits with Low-Income Tax Credits" talks about funding projects such as Ramsey Homes (though most examples are bigger and in DC).

Please see the "Executive Summary" which is essentially "P. 0" right after the "Contents" and before the "Introduction" on P. 1. Page 8 lists a pending project called Vizcaya Apartments with

17 units. Please see Section 4, P. 12 for "Basic Parameters of the Historic Tax Credit Program," which you may already know.

Ramsey Homes would be a Rehab project not a purist preservation, p. 13. Also see pre- and post- rehab photos, pp. 18 onward. "Interview Recap" re: Stakeholders Goals & Concerns, pp. 24 on.

Pp. 31 talks about the benefits of the Historic Tax Credits and pp. 35-42 give funding numbers. There is no limit to the number of Stakeholders and the report lists up to 25 for one project (though this number is not necessary).

Still on the search for more info!

Best regards,

Townley  
Historic Alexandria Foundation, Board member

**From:** [Justin Wilson](#)  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2015 10:07 AM  
**To:** [Gail Rothrock](#)  
**Cc:** [Townley McElhiney](#) ; [Penny Jones](#) ; [Elliot Bell-Krasner](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Call.Click.Connect. #80379: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Position of Historic Alexandria Foundati

Gail,

Thanks for the note and the willingness to meet yesterday.

Obviously that language does suggest a first preference for preservation, and I think ARHA would suggest that they share that. Again, if it's feasible.

Page 8 of the Plan does say:

"Parker-Gray Historic District. The James Bland,

Ramsey and Samuel Madden public housing

sites lie within the Parker Gray Historic District.

Any redevelopment plan for these sites must

pay special attention to building scale and  
cultural history and will be reviewed by the  
Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review."

The plan was developed by the Planning & Zoning Department, which includes the Historic Preservation Staff. But it is certainly true that the focus of this plan was managing the orderly transition AND preservation of the USE of the housing, if not the buildings.

Let me know what else you find in your research. We'll see you tomorrow.

-----  
Justin M. Wilson, Member  
Alexandria City Council  
Office: 703.746.4500  
Home: 703.299.1576  
[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)

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**From:** Gail Rothrock <[gcrothrock@gmail.com](mailto:gcrothrock@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2015 8:25 AM  
**To:** Justin Wilson  
**Cc:** Townley McElhiney; Penny Jones; Elliot Bell-Krasner; Gail Rothrock  
**Subject:** Re: Call.Click.Connect. #80379: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Position of Historic Alexandria Foundati

Dear Justin,

Thanks very much for your time in speaking with us last night. I think we all learned a lot about some of your questions.

I looked at the Braddock Road East Master Plan again- there is almost NOTHING about historic preservation BUT it does say, page 59:

Recommendation 13:

The Ramsey Homes site should be rehabilitated as part of the overall redevelopment program for the area, with some potential for infill, or be redeveloped with town homes or townhouse scale buildings.

I have to point out - that this wording is enough for the Council to tell ARHA that they need to go back to the drawing boards! Here you have a first choice preference in a Master Plan directive.

Moreover, there is no discussion in this plan of the implications of being in the Parker Gray Historic District, and there was no one on the Advisory Group or staff who could address those issues, that I can see in the Acknowledgements (p. 1)

Speaking of stove piping in the City - why aren't the Master Plans reviewed and commented on by all Departments before being released - no input from Historic Preservation Office or OHA that I can see.....?

Again, thanks for your time and we urge you to DENY this appeal.

Gail Rothrock

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 10, 2015, at 9:00 AM, Justin Wilson <[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)> wrote:

Alright,

See you at 6 at St. Elmo's. My cell is 703-338-2843 if anything comes up.

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Justin M. Wilson, Member  
Alexandria City Council  
Office: 703.746.4500  
Home: 703.299.1576  
[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)

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**From:** Gail Rothrock <[gcrothrock@gmail.com](mailto:gcrothrock@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 10, 2015 8:49 AM  
**To:** Justin Wilson  
**Cc:** Townley McElhiney; Penny Jones; Elliot Bell-Krasner  
**Subject:** Re: Call.Click.Connect. #80379: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Position of Historic Alexandria Foundati

6 is fine, thanks!

I also invited Penny Jones, who you have been emailing with, and Elliot Bell-Krasner, a member of HARC.

Gail

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 10, 2015, at 12:10 AM, Justin Wilson <[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)> wrote:

I had on my calendar 6:00. Did we say 6 or 6:30?

I have a 7:15, so 6:00 would be better, but either would work.

See you there.

----

Justin M. Wilson, Member  
Alexandria City Council  
Office: [703.746.4500](tel:703.746.4500)  
Home: [703.299.1576](tel:703.299.1576)  
[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)

On Sep 2, 2015, at 4:11 PM, Gail Rothrock  
<[gcrothrock@gmail.com](mailto:gcrothrock@gmail.com)> wrote:

Thanks. Townley McElhiney and I will look forward  
to meeting with you next Thursday, Sept 10 at 6:30  
at St. Elmo's.  
Gail Rothrock

On Sep 2, 2015, at 4:01 PM, Justin Wilson  
<[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)> wrote:

Gail,

Got it. Thanks.

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Justin M. Wilson, Member  
Alexandria City Council  
Office: [703.746.4500](tel:703.746.4500)  
Home: [703.299.1576](tel:703.299.1576)  
[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)

On Sep 2, 2015, at 3:59 PM,  
"[gcrothrock@gmail.com](mailto:gcrothrock@gmail.com)" <[gcrothrock@gmail.com](mailto:gcrothrock@gmail.com)>  
wrote:

Dear Call.Click.Connect. User

A request was just created using  
Call.Click.Connect. The request ID is  
80379.

**Request Details:**

- Name: Gail Rothrock
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: (703) 549-5176
- Email: [gcrothrock@gmail.com](mailto:gcrothrock@gmail.com)
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Position of Historic Alexandria Foundation on Ramsey Homes demolition appeal for September 12 docket
- Attachment: [HAF CC.Ramsey.ltr Ltrhead1.docx](#)
- Expected Response Date: Thursday, September 10

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at [the Call.Click.Connect. staff interface.](#)

If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact <mailto:CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov?subject=Call.Click.Connect.%20ticket%2080379> or call 703.746.HELP.

This is an automated email notification of a Call.Click.Connect. request. Please do not reply to this email.