

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 28, 2017

TO: CHAIRWOMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: KARL W. MORITZ, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: MAY 2ND PLANNING COMMISSION DOCKET ITEM #14 KING STREET
HOTEL - EXISTING BUILDING ON KING STREET HOTEL SITE

Community concerns have been raised about the historic status of the building at 1617 King Street that is proposed to be removed as part of the redevelopment of the site for the King Street hotel. This memorandum is intended to provide background information on the history of the building and how it has evolved over time.

The building at 1617 King Street was built sometime between 1921 and 1931 according to Sanborn maps (Figure 1). The building appears to have been built and used as a store with either office or residential space on the upper floors.

In 1983, a building permit was issued to gut the interior of the building as well as to significantly alter the exterior. The entire front façade was removed, including the brick, and rebuilt with a new window and storefront configuration (Figure 3, Figure 4). Other changes included two small additions that filled in two indented areas on the east and west facades (Figure 2).

Though it is a decent looking building, it has lost much of its original fabric which would make it a challenge to designate as an individually listed historic property. Historic Preservation staff has reviewed these issues as well and concur that the building has lost much of its integrity.

It should also be noted that the building is not located within either of the two local Alexandria historic districts nor is it within the boundaries of a National Register Historic district. Furthermore, the building is not old enough to be listed on the City's 100 year old building list. Thus, without one of these designations, staff does not have the authority to prevent the demolition of this building.

Figure 1: 1931 Sanborn Map

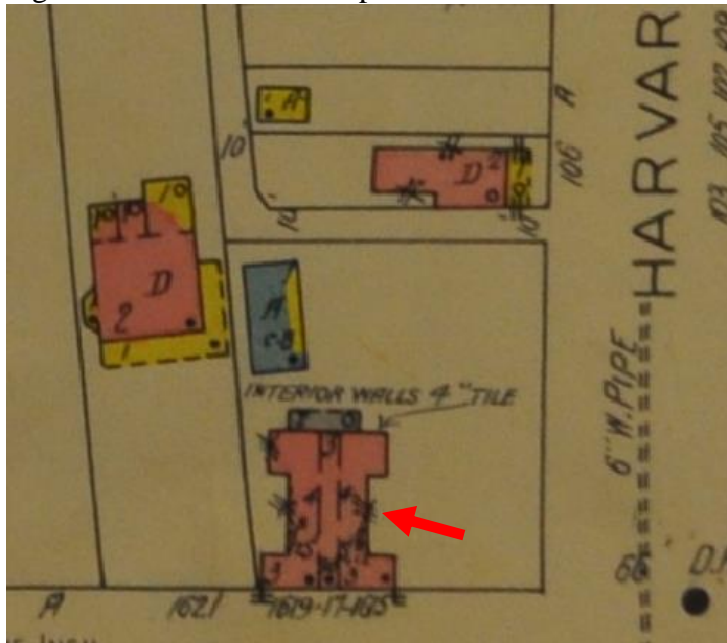


Figure 2: Alterations/additions to the building footprint



Figure 3: Before renovation (1984)

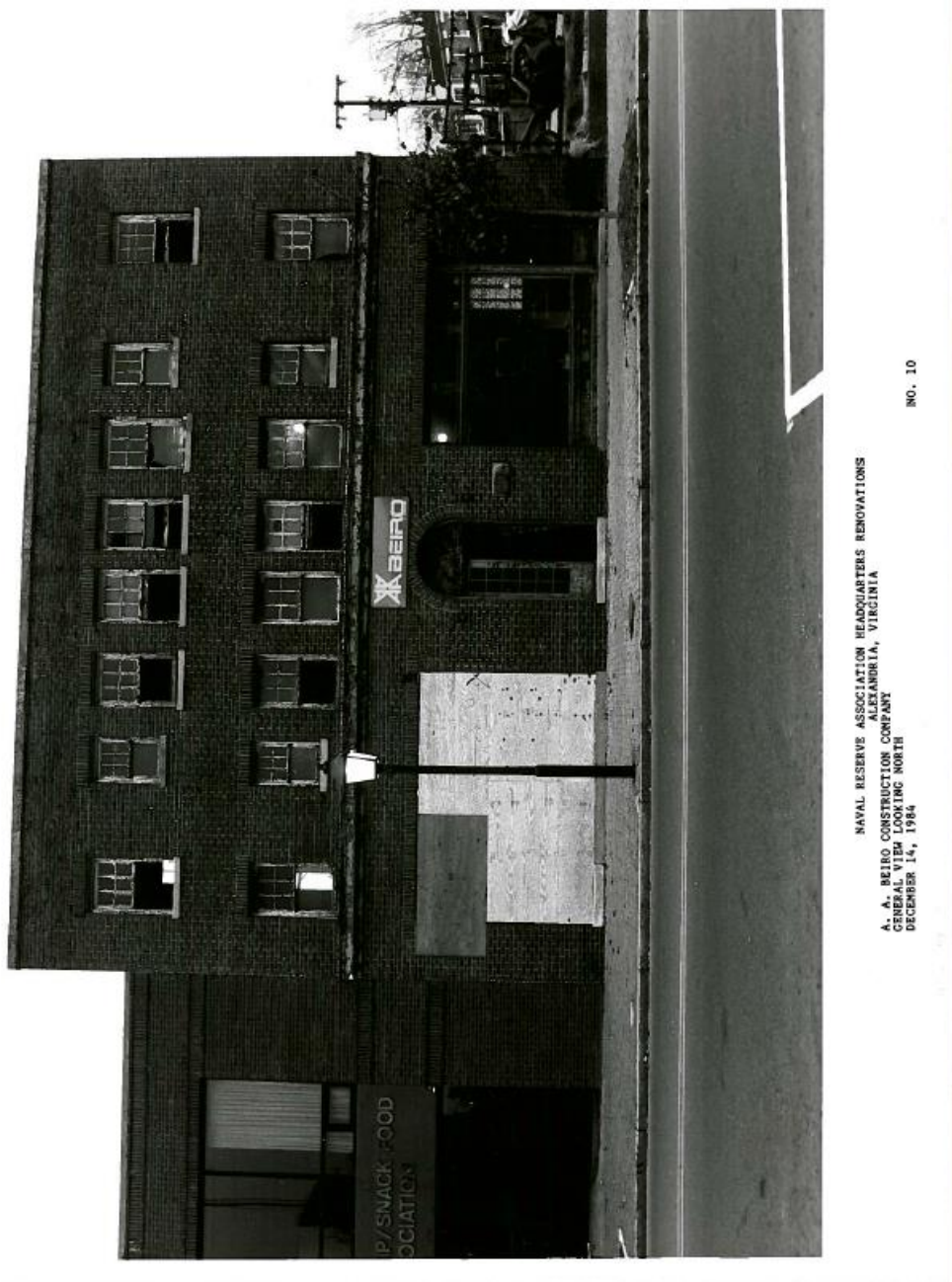


Figure 4: After renovation (1985)



NAVAL RESERVE ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS RENOVATIONS
A. A. BEIRO CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
GENERAL VIEW LOOKING NORTH
JULY 29, 1985

NY 32

Statement by

James Melton, 105 Harvard St, Alexandria VA 22314

concerning

Proposed Hotel at 1611, 1617, 1619, 1711 King St and 100 Harvard St

DSUP #2016-0024

SUP #2017-0047

With regard to the proposed project, I request that the Commission not allow the following actions:

1. Destruction of the naval reserve building for the hotel (it should be classified as an historic building)
2. Conversion of part of Harvard St to a two-way street because it will cause considerable confusion and congestion in the King St/Harvard St interchange.
3. Removal of the four(4) city posted " No Parking" signs on Harvard street
4. Placement of a large sign on Harvard St prohibiting left turn into residential houses (it is not needed)
5. Elimination of the four(4) general "on-street" parking spaces and two(2) "on-street" residential parking spaces because they are vitally needed in the area of the hotel to serve other people.
6. Destruction of the four (4) mature trees along Harvard street between King St and alley because they are of historic significance

The parking studies provided in the SUP are highly flawed and as a result we recommend that approval for the SUP be postponed pending additional studies.

The on-street parking study along King St, Harvard St, and Cameron St uses some very unusual hours for the study. If you have ever walked along these streets in the morning during the weekdays, you will notice that it is rare to see even one parking space available on Harvard or Cameron. Some may be available on King because these are spaces with parking meters.

The reason for this is that workers in the area of this project park at these locations if at all possible. Especially when their employers do not provide parking. When a person is making minimum wage, spending \$10 or more per day for parking pretty much defeats the purpose of

working in an Alexandria store in the first place. Furthermore most of these stores on King St have a difficult time making ends meet so we cannot expect their employers helping much toward parking.

One also notices many out-of-state automobiles on these streets in the morning which may be hotel guests who do not want to spend \$20-\$30 for overnight parking.

Therefore, when this project eliminates several of the parking spaces along Harvard St, we should expect chaos as these parkers scurry to find other on-street parking in the area of their work or hotel putting an even greater premium on on-street parking.

The problem is that with this project as with the Hilton Garden Inn etc. the city continues to push growth while eliminating the city supplied infrastructure (e.g., parking) needed to truly support the success of these projects.

The in-house parking study talked about in the study is also flawed and also misapplied.

The summer months of June, July and August are the months with maximum hotel parking requirements in this area. And weekends during these months are the peak of the peak requirements. This is because in these months, families travel in their cars to Alexandria to stay in a hotel and see the area, not business travelers coming by plane or train. This is particularly true on weekends when people not too distant from Alexandria come in to have a good time and see the sites.

The planners must also know that the output from parking studies generally reflect the number of parking spaces required to meet the demand 95% of the time. That means 5% of the time, the number of spaces provided is not adequate. That means about 18 days a year the provided parking will be inadequate.

The problem with this is that hotels are likely to have parking inadequacies at exactly the same time (e.g., huge events and holidays packing the hotels at the same time) and we already have three hotels in this specific area whose parking is likely inadequate at the same time. Now we want to add a fourth? then a fifth? then a sixth?

We recommend that approval of this SUP be delayed until "more reasonable" off-street and on-street parking assessment and analysis is done.

Fwd: Proposed Hotel at King and Harvard Sts

Kathleen Fitzgerald <hoosierfitz@aol.com>

Sun 4/30/2017 6:03 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Kathleen Fitzgerald <hoosierfitz@aol.com>
Date: April 30, 2017 at 5:15:07 PM EDT
To: Ryan.Price@alexandriava.gov
Subject: Proposed Hotel at King and Harvard Sts

My name is Kathleen Fitzgerald. I have lived at 107 Harvard Street since 1989. Harvard Street is a quiet little one way street one block from the King Street Metro. It is one of the most charming streets on our end of town. Now a large hotel is proposed to be constructed on a vacant lot at the corner of King and Harvard Sts . and the destruction of three small building to the west of it.

According to an article in the Alexandria Gazette dated February 24, 1920. the houses on the east side of Harvard were constructed to solve the housing problem "for those new citizens who are coming to Alexandria to work for the Navel Torpedo Station now beginning operations here,...".

It is my understanding that the 60 foot front height on King Street far exceeds the height limit of 37 feet set forth in the guideline of the King Street Retail Plan. How did that happen??

A building of that size will cast a rather large shadow over our houses especially those on the west side of the street. The buildings on the corner of Harvard and King will have three levels to reduce the overwhelming height. Houses on the alley will not see the light of day!!

Also, there will be a major traffic problem which the developers propose to solve by making Harvard Street two ways up to the entrance to the alley. This project has too many flaws which the developers want the residents to solve. It is too large. You can't fit her stepsister 's foot into Cinderella's glass slipper. The buildings going east on King should be lower not higher toward the historic district. There are more residential streets on the north side of King which need to be protected. Let's start with Harvard Street!

Parking will be a nightmare. There will be limited underground parking for \$35 per day for employees, hotel guests and restaurant customers. Guess where they will park? That's right, on Harvard Street! Residential parking will be a necessity if this behemoth is approved.

I have requested more information about the hours of the restaurant. I believe they have changed them since our last meeting in April.

May 2, 2017, Planning Commission Meeting

Naval Reserve Building, 1619 King Street

Good evening, I have come in support of preserving the Naval Reserve Association building at the corner of Harvard and King Streets.

Why do you continue to take from the historical City of Alexandria? This particular building was built in 1928, originally as an apartment building housing tenants. This building was later gutted in 1985 becoming home to the Naval Reserve Association, keeping the original bricks and mortar. Do not destroy this beautiful historical building. It is only shy of being designated as historic by 11 years. The Mayor and Council Members need to declare this and preserve the building. This city is becoming nothing but a plaque of its history. Our history is being destroyed by new development. This must stop now.

You want tourism? This building needs to be preserved, take this proposed development off the table now. This building could revert back to the apartment building it originally was or may be it could become your welcome center or a museum at this end of King Street inviting people into our wonderful "historic" city as they come from the metro and other neighborhoods. We do not need more hotels at this end of King Street we have more than enough hotels already. Please think hard, look close, see what we are saying, preserve this beautiful almost 100 year old building.

Thank you.

Bea Porter
1727 Cameron Street

Alexandria Planning Commission
Public Hearing
May 2, 2017

Subject: King Street Hotel, DSUP #2016-0024, SUP #2017-0047, TMP SUP #2017-0051

First, I want to thank the developer and City for working with neighbors on various issues. For instance, I am glad to see the traffic calming bulb-outs and traffic signage in the City report (including “no through traffic” at Cameron alley entrance and “no-left turn” at the alley exit onto Harvard).

Harvard Street neighbors in the Upper King Street Neighborhood Association (UKSNA) submitted written comments to the hotel developer and City on the King Street Hotel proposal (attached are letters dated March 21, 2016, January 8, 2017, and April 1, 2017). In those letters we expressed serious concerns about parking, loading dock space, and building height.

Thus, I encourage you to either deny, or delay for further study, the permit requests, and to reduce the height of the hotel.

A. Deny SUP for a parking space reduction.

UKSNA: We asked for a proposal that addressed the parking difficulties on Harvard (i.e., visitors, employees playing musical car spots to avoid 2 hour restriction, lack of enforcement). Instead, we lost 5 on-street parking spots (due to the 2-way street proposal), have an SUP request to reduce the hotel parking spots by 32 spots (from 87 to 55), 15 daily hotel employees with no hotel provided parking, and a fundamentally flawed parking study.

The parking study in the Staff report is flawed because it was conducted by the developer during non-peak parking hours (around 6 pm as stated by the developer at the January 30, 2017 community meeting). Non-peak (i.e., availability and turn-over of spots) parking hours are between 4-7 pm which is a transition period when employees/visitors are leaving the City and residents are returning from work. Peak hours are around 10am and 2pm.

The parking study should be redone. In addition, I would like the “residential pay-by-phone” program as part-and-parcel for approving the hotel development (see page 15 of Staff report). I would also like the hotel to provide parking garage subsidies to employees who are unable to use public transportation (i.e., may not live near a metro,

or drive in from the x-burbs). We already submitted a petition to extend the time frames for the current 2-hour parking restrictions.

B. Deny/delay the SUP for the reduction of loading space.

UKSNA: The Hilton loading bays has been discussed at every meeting as an example of the traffic problems that can occur as a result of inadequate loading bays (delivery trucks line-up/block the left hand lane of Cameron every day).

At the April 13, 2017 meeting, the developer stated that there would be “two regular size loading bays” so the Hilton problem would not occur on Harvard or the west-side alley. The SUP for a space reduction is a surprise to us.

The delivery trucks will most likely wait their turn by lining up (idling) on the 2-way portion of Harvard or in west-side alley.

C. Reduce the height of the hotel

UKSNA: We asserted that a 6-story hotel is simply too high and overwhelms the small 2-story townhomes on Harvard. Harvard is in the “Uptown Parker-Gray Historic District” which is an area on the National Register of Historic Places. Most of the homes on Harvard are registered as “contributing properties” including 106 Harvard (adjacent to the hotel).

Although an SUP is not required for the height of the hotel, I encourage the Commission to exercise its discretion to reduce the height of the building, so that it is more compatible with the scale and historic character of Harvard.

Thank you.

K. Scott Brown
111 Harvard Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

April 1, 2017

Hi Megan,

Thank you for setting up the follow-up meeting. We look forward to hearing about the operational elements of the proposed hotel.

In addition, I believe some of the points from the last meeting that we expect you to resolve/address are as follows:

1) Parking Study: The parking study conducted by the developer was flawed for several reasons (as we discussed in the meeting, e.g., the study included metered parking – which is not available to residents overnight, the study was conducted during non-peak parking hours, etc.).

- Our expectation is that the parking study would be conducted again.

2) Parking Restrictions: The parking restrictions on Harvard are currently, 2 hour parking Mon-Sat from 8:00am – 11:00pm. There are no parking restrictions on Sun. This would allow hotel customers to essentially park for free on Harvard Street overnight, versus paying \$35 for overnight parking in the hotel garage. This parking arrangement will push hotel customer parking onto Harvard in a relatively major way.

- Our expectation is that the City will investigate changing the parking restrictions to 24 hours, 7 days a week. Or change parking to residents only.
- We would like the City to provide us specifics on steps the City will take to resolve this issue (that is, not put the burden on the residents of Harvard to get this done, but rather to include parking restriction modifications as part-and-parcel for this project).

3) Employee Parking: Our understanding is that all employees (direct or contractor) will have to pay \$35/day parking.

- This parking fee structure is simply unreasonable given Harvard is a small one-way residential street with very limited parking. Our expectation is that hotel employees will be provided free parking.

4) Parking on two-way portion of Harvard: You stated that the parking spots on the west side, proposed 2-way portion, of Harvard will be lost. This statement was contrary to your statements in prior meetings and is unreasonable given the limited parking on Harvard.

- Our expectation is that this loss of spaces will somehow be mitigated through tight parking restrictions (i.e., residential parking only), designated residential parking in the hotel parking lot, etc.

5) Traffic Calming: In our prior letter, we asked whether any traffic calming could be implemented just north of the hotel alley (garage) entrance to calm traffic entering the residential portion of Harvard (and to prevent delivery trucks from making a left hand turn onto Harvard)? You provided an off-the-cuff response.

- Our expectation is that you (or the City officials present at the meeting) provide specific and workable traffic calming suggestions that the City will allow for this project. For instance, given that that parking is restricted for 5 feet on the north side of the Harvard alleyway entrances, is it possible to install bulb-outs within the 5 foot setoffs without losing parking spaces? What about also installing a speed bump in this location between the bulb-outs?

6) Traffic Control in Alley. We discussed the type of traffic control that could be implemented to prevent alley cut-through from Cameron to King? Signs seemed to top the list of possibilities.

- Our expectation is that you (or the City officials) provide specifics on the permitted signs or other traffic control suggestions that are workable and that the City will allow (and include) for this project.

7) Load Bays and Dumpsters.

- (A) A community member asked about a cover for the dumpster area.
 - Please address.
- (B) The Hilton loading bays has been discussed at every meeting as an example of the traffic problems that can occur as a result of bays that are too small.
 - We would like a straight answer from City officials on how this problem will be avoided on this hotel project.

8) Architecture. The location of the hotel is sensitive because it is literally steps from the historic district and it abuts a residential neighborhood. As such, we asked (several times) that the City Historic District officials bless the design of the hotel given the hotel's location. We appreciate the improvements you made in the design to make it more compatible with the area. However, we would still like the City architect to bless your design (and for you to make any further design refinements as suggested by the City architect).

- Al Cox, the City's Historic Preservation Manager, Architect, has been informed to expect your request that he "bless" the design as being compatible with the specific location.

Thank you, Scott.

Attention: Jonathan Rak, McGuireWoods LLP

From: Residents of the Upper King Street Neighborhood Association (UKSNA).

Subject: Comments on King Street Hotel Concept 2 Proposal

Dear Mr. Rak:

Thank you for presenting the hotel proposal at the UKSNA meeting on December 12, 2016. We still have major concerns about this proposal. As a starting point, we would like to see the developer comply with the City's recommendations and requests in the City's letter dated November 30, 2016. We would also like you to factor in our initial comments as follows.

A. Height, Size, Mass

1. At 6-stories, the building is simply too high and overwhelms the small 2-story townhomes on Harvard. Reduce the height to no more than 5 stories.
2. The number of rooms, at 124, is too dense for a hotel abutting a residential street. Reduce the number of rooms to no more than 100 which would be more in line with the Lorien and Hampton (which do not even abut residential streets).

B. Parking

1. The portion of Harvard converted to a 2-way street must have parking on both sides of the street. Please note that 3 feet of the current parking lot is on City property (see GIS parcel viewer on City's website, and plans submitted to the City for the parking lot). Please provide specifics on the street widening (parking, property lines, offsets, etc.).
2. Please explain employee (direct and contract) and general contractor parking (e.g., cost, number of spaces allocated, etc). For example, will room cleaning employees (direct or contract) be provided free parking?
3. How can parking restrictions on Harvard change to alleviate residential parking difficulties? For example, can Harvard parking be limited to residential "5" permit holders (with 2 year-long guest passes provided to each residential home on a yearly basis)?
4. Harvard is a very small street with very limited parking. Thus, we believe no variances from City parking allotment requirements should be granted.

C. Harvard Traffic

1. Can any traffic calming be implemented just north of the hotel alley (garage) entrance to calm traffic entering the residential portion of Harvard?

D. Alley (behind West side Harvard)

1. Please examine the alley ownership/right of way. Specifically, 116 and 118 Harvard appear to own the alley behind their properties (see GIS parcel viewer).
2. What type of traffic control can be implemented to prevent alley cut-through from Cameron to King?

E. Adjacent 106 Harvard Street townhouse.

1. Please reach out to the owners of this 106 Harvard (as requested by the City).
2. Provide details on property abutment issues. For example,
 - a) Provide the setback measurements.
 - b) Provide more details on the “privacy screen”.
 - c) What happened to the green space buffer shown in the prior plan?

F. Load Bays and Dumpsters

1. Explore repositioning the service bays (location of the loading dock and dumpsters) to be further west and away from the residential property.
2. No variances should be permitted for loading dock size. Please note that serious issues with the undersized Hilton loading dock were raised/discussed at the last meeting.
3. The turning radius for the loading trucks is clearly too tight on Harvard and in the loading dock area (see Concept 2 plans). Please rectify.
4. Please provide visuals of the screenings for the dumpster enclosure area and loading dock area.

G. Architecture

1. Revise the design so that it is more compatible with the historic architecture in Old Town. That is, please use a more formal, traditional design, e.g., Georgian, Art Deco, etc. (see the Lorien for inspiration). The design is too modern and dissimilar to the other buildings on King Street.
2. Small 2-story townhouse element on Harvard.
 - (a) Raise 2nd floor roofline parapets.
 - (b) Add faux windows on north side.
 - (c) Explain the venting on the north side wall of the townhouse.
(We assume food and HVAC venting will be on/out the roof).

3. The architecture details of the rear of the building should be on par with the front of the building, since the rear is very visible to the residential area. Please provide adequate visuals of the building rear in design revisions.

4. Please show the green roofs on the setbacks in the design revisions?

Electrical

(1) We would like to see electrical wires on the development property and alley (garage) entrance way area (including poll at corner of entrance) buried.

(2) We also request as a proffer from the developer that the electrical lines on the west side of Harvard be buried.

As you know, we were not provided the developer's Concept 2 proposal, dated November 4, 2016 until December 9, 2 days before the community meeting. As a result, the meeting was not as productive as it could have been. In the spirit of good faith and productive meetings in the future, we would appreciate a copy of any plan submissions made to the City.

We look forward to meeting you Monday, January 30. We very much hope that at the meeting you will be fully prepared to show and or explain revisions that address the City's and our Concept 2 comments.

Sincerely,
Residents of UKSNA

(March 21, 2016)

Dear Mr. Rak,

Thank you for presenting the AC by Marriott hotel proposal at the UKSNA meeting on March 9, 2016. We appreciate your reaching out to us early in the process with your preliminary designs. You asked us to provide you with our concerns and any specific requests regarding the proposal. We have received written feedback from many neighbors on various issues and potential proffers that we may request the developer to include. However, we believe it is premature to discuss any proffers at this point. Instead, we would like you to address the threshold, high-level concerns that topped everyone's list. These concerns are the size of the building, traffic, and parking which are all separately addressed at the bottom of this letter.

As a general matter, we believe that the scale and massing of your preliminary design is entirely incompatible with scale and historic character of Harvard Street. The homes on Harvard are only two stories high and have small footprints. Harvard is in the "Uptown Parker-Gray Historic District" which is an area on the National Register of Historic Places. Most of the homes on Harvard, which were built circa 1910, are registered as "contributing properties" including 106 Harvard.

We also believe the traffic and parking issues posed by your preliminary design would significantly compromise the quality of life for the residents of Harvard. As a residential street, Harvard does not have parking meters and relies on an honor system and ticketing for parking management. As result, employees of surrounding businesses and visitors park on Harvard because of limited enforcement. They park on Harvard for an extended time, returning to the car during the day to move it to another spot on the street. In addition, Harvard is a narrow one way residential street that is not conducive to the proposed valet-parking traffic flow, and the additional vehicle volume will overwhelm the small street. Your preliminary design also presents problematic issues concerning the alleyway on the west side of Harvard.

Finally, in order to help everyone better visualize your future proposals, it may be helpful to include some preliminary aesthetics and fenestration on your scale and massing images. This would be particularly helpful in visualizing the back side of the hotel that is adjacent to 106 Harvard (including window options, e.g., single window at end of interior hallway on each floor). We understand that the development site is not within the Old Town Historic District. Nevertheless, given the proximity of the site to the historic district and historic homes on Harvard, we ask that your proposed hotel follow the aesthetic and material guidelines required by the buildings within the Old Town Historical District. For example, we believe that the design of the Lorien Hotel blends in nicely with the historical character of the area. A modern design or another "cookie cutter" federal design like the Hampton Inn is not desirable.

The following are our primary concerns that we would like you to address.

1) Scale and Mass

At seventy-seven feet tall, the proposed hotel would be taller than its commercial neighbors on King Street. The building would create a "canyon" with the six-story Hampton Inn directly across the street. The building also would be three times taller than any of the homes on Harvard and would sit dauntingly close to 106 Harvard. (Also, the 118 room proposal is alarming for a relatively small property lot).

We would like to see a proposal that enhances the King Street "gateway" into Old Town, and that is compatible with the scale of the neighboring homes on Harvard.

2) Traffic

Harvard is a small, residential, one-way street which leads to Cameron Street which is another one-way street. Trucks cannot easily navigate the narrow street nor make the tight turns into the alleyways. Cars already speed down Harvard in an effort to quickly spin around the block. Cars often make U-turns in the middle of the block and drive back up Harvard the wrong way in order to shortcut back to King.

A hotel and restaurant, with a valet parking garage serviced from Harvard, would make all of these problems exponentially worse. Harvard would essentially become the driveway for the hotel. The hotel would also exacerbate the congestion and disorder in the parking lot and alley behind the homes on the west side of Harvard Street. Also, the additional traffic volume would increase the safety hazard to the many children living on Harvard, and would be counterproductive to recent efforts to control traffic flow near the new school and pool.

We would like to see a proposal that mitigates the additional traffic problems on Harvard, and that clearly addresses any potential impact (traffic and/or service operations) on the west side alleyway.

3) Parking

Parking on Harvard is already at a premium - residents of the street own more cars than can be accommodated by street parking. Harvard Street residents also have difficulty finding street parking because residents compete for parking spaces with visitors and employees of the local businesses. Weekend parking has also worsened since the opening of the Lorien hotel and the soccer fields at the new Jefferson Houston School. The proposed hotel would create additional parking difficulties for Harvard St. residents.

We would like to see a proposal that addresses the additional parking difficulties that the proposed hotel would almost certainly cause.

Sincerely,
Residents of UKSNA

jonathan p. rak
Direct: 703.712.5411

McGUIREWOODS

jrak@mcguirewoods.com
Fax: 703.712.5231

May 2, 2017

VIA EMAIL TO karl.mortiz@alexandriava.gov

Mary Lyman, Chair and
Members of Planning Commission
301 King Street, Suite 2100
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

RE: DSUP 2016-0024; SUP 2017-0047; TMP SUP 2017-0051
May 2, 2017 Planning Commission Hearing, Docket Item #14

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

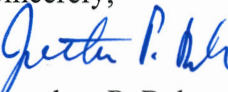
On behalf my client, MHF King Street V, LLC, I am requesting the following changes to the staff recommended conditions of approval for the above-referenced matter.

70. The applicant shall install a decorative paving treatment in the alley from Harvard Street to the garage entrance to the satisfaction of Planning & Zoning and Transportation & Environmental Services. Any bricks installed in the alley shall be placed on asphalt pursuant to the City's standards and shall meet the requirements of ASTM C1272 for heavy vehicular traffic. Any other paving treatment shall meet appropriate requirements for heavy vehicular traffic. Shop drawings of the ~~pavers~~ decorative paving treatment shall be submitted to the City of Alexandria for approval.
(T&ES)(P&Z)

72. The full extent of the alley from Harvard Street to the ~~northern property line of the project site~~ garage entrance, including the public right-of-way portion shall be maintained by the owners of the site to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services. A maintenance agreement shall be approved and recorded prior to release of the Site Plan* (T&ES)

I look forward to discussing these requested amendments to the staff recommended conditions with you at the Planning Commission hearing.

Sincerely,


Jonathan P. Rak