

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

Board of Architectural Review
Thursday, January 21, 2021
7:00 pm, Virtual Public Hearing
Zoom Webinar

Members Present: Christine Roberts, Chair
James Spencer, Vice Chair
Purvi Irwin
John Sprinkle
Robert Adams
Lynn Neihardt
Christine Sennott

Members Absent: None

Secretary: William Conkey, AIA, Historic Preservation Architect

Staff Present: Amirah Lane, Historic Preservation Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Architectural Review hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. All members were present at the meeting by video conference.

Ms. Roberts stated that Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic emergency, the January 21, 2021 meeting of the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) is being held electronically pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2 3708.2(A)(3), the Continuity of Government ordinance adopted by the City Council on June 20, 2020 or Section 4-0.01(g) in HB29 and HB30, enacted by the 2020 Virginia General Assembly (Virginia Acts of Assembly Ch. 1283 and 1289), to undertake essential business. BAR board members and staff are participating from remote locations through Zoom Webinar. The meeting can be accessed by the public through broadcasted live on the government channel 70, streaming on the City's website and can be accessed via Zoom hyperlink on the docket.

II. MINUTES

2. Consideration of the minutes from the **January 6, 2020** public hearing.

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Submitted

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve the minutes from the January 6, 2020 meeting, as submitted.

III. ITEMS DEFERRED FROM THIS HEARING

3. BAR #2020-00616 OHAD

Request for partial demolition/ encapsulation at 208 South Payne Street.

Applicant: Alabama Avenue LC

4. BAR #2020-00615 OHAD

Request for alterations at 208 South Payne Street.

Applicant: Alabama Avenue LC

BOARD ACTION: Deferred

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural Review accepted the request for deferral of BAR #2020-00615 and BAR #2020-00616.

5. BAR #2020-00598 OHAD

Request to install small cell facility on a new standalone pole adjacent to 500 South Royal Street.

Applicant: Cellco Partnership dba Verizon Wireless

BOARD ACTION: Deferred

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural Review accepted the request for deferral of BAR #2020-00598.

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

6. BAR #2020-00025 OHAD

Request for alterations at 512 Queen Street.

Applicants: Todd B. Catlin and Daniel W. Lee

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Submitted

On a motion by Ms. Sennott, and seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2020-00025, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

7. BAR #2020-00618 OHAD

Request for alterations at 130 Prince Street.

Applicants: Gregory Wilson and Kathleen Cummings

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Submitted

On a motion by Ms. Sennott, and seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2020-00618, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

V. PREVIOUSLY DEFERRED BY THE BOARD

8. BAR #2020-00307 OHAD

Request to install small cell facility on a new standalone pole adjacent to 1 Prince Street.

Applicant: Cellco Partnership dba Verizon Wireless

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Amended, 7-0

On a motion by Ms. Irwin and seconded by Ms. Neihardt, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2020-00307, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

- 1- To the possible extent, the applicant should work with the property owner who objected to the small cell installation at the location due to viewshed obstruction and determine either a less obstructive location between windows or a higher pole.

REASON

In general, the Board had no objections to the standalone pole location and/or design. The Board had concerns about pole height and location when obstructing viewsheds in the historic districts.

SPEAKERS

Joshua Schakola, representing Cellco Partnership dba Verizon Wireless, was available to answer any questions.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Irwin questioned the possibility of increasing the pole height. Mr. Schakola explained that there is a limit of fifty feet in height for poles around the city and to go beyond that would require City Council approval.

Mr. Spencer found that the idea of proposing a different height would set a bad precedent since every homeowner will feel entitled to do the same. Mr. Sprinkle added that only public buildings' viewsheds, not private, are protected.

Ms. Sennott suggested that the new standalone pole be placed between windows to avoid the viewshed obstruction; the suggestion was accepted by the Board and made a condition of approval.

Ms. Roberts suggested that the applicant work with the local public before scheduling the proposal for a hearing. Mr. Schakola accepted. There was no further discussion.

9. BAR #2020-00553 PG

Request to install small cell facility on a utility pole on public property adjacent to 215 North Patrick Street.

Applicant: Cellco Partnership dba Verizon Wireless

BOARD ACTION: Deferred

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural Review accepted the request for deferral of BAR #2020-00553.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

None.

REASON

The Board agreed that a standalone pole could be an option for this location since there is no other existing suitable pole for small cell installation in the vicinity.

SPEAKERS

Joshua Schakola, representing Cellco Partnership dba Verizon Wireless, was available to answer any questions.

DISCUSSION

The Board acknowledged letters of concern from the public about the pole location and inquired if there was another pole that could receive the small cell facility. Mr. Schakola explained that in this location the subject pole is the only suitable pole to receive the small cell facility.

Ms. Roberts suggested that a standalone pole could be a solution for this location and advised the applicant to study the possibility and bring the findings back before the Board for evaluation. Mr. Schakola agreed and requested deferral.

10. BAR #2020-00396 PG

Request for new construction at 1413 Princess Street.
Applicant: Deyi Awadallah

11. BAR #2020-00412 PG

Request for new construction at 1415 Princess Street.
Applicant: Deyi Awadallah

BOARD ACTION: Deferred

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural Review accepted the request for deferral of BAR #2020-00396 and BAR #2020-00412.

REASON

In general, The Board did not object to the construction of the townhouses. However, the Board requested additional information to clarify many aspects of the proposed design including location, restudy of proportions, and architectural detailing.

SPEAKERS

Deyi Awadallah, applicant, was available for questions.

Steve Davidson, 535 N Columbus St., spoke in opposition. He referenced the zoning ordinance and expressed the opinion that the proposed design is not compatible with the community.

Laura Kibby, 1401 Princess St., spoke in opposition. She noted that the purpose of the BAR is to say no to incompatible buildings and that the proposed building design is incompatible with history.

Allen Russell, 1403 Princess St., spoke in opposition. He never expected that a house would be built right on the property line adjacent to his house. He felt that the design sticks out from the rest of the neighborhood.

Michael Stauber, 1401 Princess St., spoke in opposition, saying that the design is not compatible

with the block and asked that the building be pushed to the rear of the site.

Gail Rothrock, 209 Duke St., spoke in opposition. She felt that the concept of a triplet does not match the neighborhood. She also expressed concern with the design impact on the historic fabric.

DISCUSSION

The Board stated that the submitted plans were inaccurate and it was therefore difficult to weigh in on the proposed design.

Mr. Adams stated the triplet concept is a bad precedent the design should reference other historic styles. He noted that a restudy is needed.

Ms. Neilhardt wanted to see more differentiation between the proposed townhouses because the neighborhood has a variety of styles. She suggested that the middle building be pushed further back and noted that design faults are more obvious with three buildings instead of one. She noted that a colonial style was originally submitted but she could support a modern style.

Mr. Spencer agreed that it is not uncommon to have a front entrance and a side entrance home next to each other. He does not mind a modern design next to a historic architectural style. He stated that the architectural elements can use some refining, including the window portions, cornice, and bay window.

Mr. Sprinkle stated this was a missed opportunity and recognized the constraints of the Special Use Plan and the approval of the adjacent building at 1417 Princess Street. He noted that the context of the block is very important. He also stated that the townhouses should be treated as separate designs.

Ms. Irwin stated that if the properties are moved closer to the sidewalk, the neighboring property (1403 Princess St.) would potentially not have a wall facing the back half of the dwelling. She noted that the house should be simple, given the size, and that the number of design elements is good. She likes the design and would not oppose some variations.

Ms. Roberts supported different design concepts for each property.

Ms. Sennott wants to see a connection to the Arts and Craft architectural style and would like for the townhouses to blend into the streetscape. She supports a restudy.

Mr. Spencer and Ms. Irwin requested updated block site plan and diagrams to show site location options for the proposed townhouses.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

12. BAR #2020-00610 PG

Request for alterations at 1000 Queen Street.

Applicant: Bravo Solutions

BOARD ACTION: Denied

On a motion by Ms. Neihardt and seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board of Architectural Review voted to deny BAR #2020-00610. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

REASON

The Board had no objections to staff recommendations.

SPEAKERS

Perry Henderson, general contractor, was available to answer questions.

Gail Rothrock, 209 Duke St, HAF, spoke in support of staff recommendations.

Steve Milone, 907 Prince Street, citizen, spoke in support of staff recommendations, saying that painting masonry does not meet the zoning ordinance or the Design Guidelines.

Yvonne Callahan, 735 S. Lee St., spoke in support of staff recommendations, noting that the Old Town Civic Association has historically opposed painting unpainted masonry.

DISCUSSIONS

The Board agreed with staff recommendations and noted reasons why painting masonry is inappropriate.

Ms. Irwin noted similarities to a recent case on King St. at the previous hearing. She noted that painting a masonry building makes the building lose its detail and charm. It also creates a maintenance issue because the building must be repainted, and it is not an alternative to cleaning the brick. Repointing is the better method for brick repair. She supports the staff recommendation to denial.

Mr. Sprinkle stated property owners in the historic districts receive a letter annually stating what requires BAR approval.

Ms. Roberts noted that it is rare for the Board to support the painting of masonry because painting hurts the masonry more than it helps.

13. BAR #2020-00619 OHAD

Request for partial demolition/ encapsulation at 810 Prince Street.
Applicant: Puscheck LLC

14. BAR #2020-00617 OHAD

Request for alteration at 810 Prince Street.
Applicant: Puscheck LLC

BOARD ACTION: Deferred for restudy

On a motion by Ms. Irwin and seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board of Architectural Review voted to defer BAR #2020-00617 and BAR #2020-00619, for a restudy. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

N/A

REASON

SPEAKERS

Ms. Karen Conkey, project architect, made a brief presentation and was available to answer questions.

Mr. Kahan Dillon, applicant, was available to answer questions.

Steve Milone, 907 Prince Street, President of Old Town Civic Association, spoke against the proposed upper roof deck along the Prince Street side of the house.

Victoria Vergason, 808 Prince Street, noted that 808 Prince is historic and that Mr. Adams designed the renovation several years ago. She expressed concern about the fire stair attached to the west elevation of her home and questioned the appropriateness of a roof deck on a historic building.

Michael Vergason, 808 Prince Street, expressed concern about the possibility of basement excavation damaging his house's footings, as well as the issue with the fire stair. Ms. Conkey assured the Vergasons that she will ensure that the fire stair does not damage their house.

Alexander Sant'Antonio, 208 South Alfred Street, spoke in opposition to the roof decks, noting that any visibility would compromise rooflines and establish an inappropriate precedent.

John Harman, owner of 812 Prince Street, agreed with the prior speakers and expressed concern about the weight of the roof decks on the historic structure, and questioned the appropriateness of metal cable railings.

Patrick Wood, 814 Prince Street, agreed with Mr. Sant'Antonio.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Adams praised Ms. Conkey's documentation and noted that the permitting process will deal with any potential structural problems. He has no issue with the cellar but expressed concern with the visibility of the roof decks, noting that they will not be visible from Prince Street. Mr. Adams feels that the architectural character of the property does not lend itself to a roof deck, especially if umbrellas and furniture are added.

Ms. Irwin noted that the lower deck at the rear of the property will not be visible from a public right of way and the cable railings disappear. The minimal design of the roof decks provides a light touch. She has no issue with the design and noted that the BAR does not have purview over neighbor privacy concerns. She expressed general support of the project.

Ms. Neihardt agreed with Mr. Adams.

Mr. Sprinkle noted that the applicant should work closely with Alexandria Archaeology prior to excavating the cellar. He also expressed concern that shoring up the structure could harm to

historic material. Ms. Roberts reminded him that this topic is outside of BAR purview.

Ms. Sennott referenced the Design Guidelines, observing that the proposed roof decks do not interfere with the roofline and do not detract from the historic architecture. She therefore does not oppose the roof decks. She praised Ms. Conkey's designs.

Mr. Spencer had no issue with the project, as the roof decks are minimally visible. He noted that if this were a corner lot, he would oppose the project. As it is not a corner lot, he is in support. He highly recommended that the applicant find a way to make the fire stair self-supporting.

Mr. Spencer moved to approve the project; Ms. Irwin seconded. This motion was denied 4 – 3. Ms. Irwin then moved that the applicant return to the BAR with a substantially different design; that motion passed.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

15. BAR #2020-00612 OHAD

Request for concept review at 101 Duke Street.

Applicant: Cummings Investment Associates Inc.

SPEAKERS

Garrett Erdle, representing the applicant, introduced the project and the project team.

Shawn Glerum, architect with Odell Architects, presented the design for the project.

Public Comments

Stephen and Ellen Mitchell, 115 Duke Street, felt that the design for the project seems to be relating to the hotel across the street and the design of the rear of the property appears to be less evolved.

Gail Rothrock, 209 Duke Street, stated this is an important site as a gateway into the City when approaching from the South. She suggested that 6 4-story townhouses are not appropriate in this location and would rather see 4 3-story townhouses with entrances direct from the sidewalk.

Kathleen and Bruce Oehler, 108 Duke Street, said that they appreciate the effort that the applicant has made towards public outreach.

Yvonne Callahan, 735 Lee Street, supported the comments from Gail Rothrock and feels that the design seems awkward. She asked that the view from the west side of the site be improved and that the building relate more closely to Union Street.

The public comment period was closed

DISCUSSION

Ms. Irwin agreed with the staff recommendations regarding the design. She felt that building feels too tall and that the proportions are wrong. She suggested that the introduction in varying

heights of entry stoops could help the building relate better to the street. She stated that it is important for the design for the building to be a reflection of the current time and place and that the building should be special. She felt that the height is too tall. The architectural character should be more of the time and place and that the proportions need further development.

Ms. Sennott stated that she felt that the building is too large and should be designed to be more consistent with the smaller neighboring buildings. She noted that the 100 block of Queen Street has more variety of building entrance heights than the proposed design.

Mr. Adams agreed with the previous comments of the other Board members and felt that the proposed design is too tall and massive. He felt that the architectural character could have additional variety but like the approach to the design. He suggested the possibility of adding additional variety in the setback from the street to the various elements.

Mr. Spencer agreed with comments from other Board members. He noted an architectural disconnect between the modern fourth floor element onto the historicist lower portion of the building when the two are being built at the same time. He felt that the entrances are too tall above the grade at Union Street. He suggested that the applicant look at the possibility of using split level interiors to address the issues with the level of the garage at the rear of the site. He suggested that the proportions of the façade are not correct and that this is a result of the height of the first floor. He stated that the designs should not be a direct replica of historic properties.

Ms. Neihardt agreed with comments from other Board members. She felt that the project is too large and massive and that the project is an opportunity to relate to the character of the waterfront.

Mr. Sprinkle felt that the building is reading as one monolithic building rather than individual townhomes. He suggested that the applicant look to 18th and 19th century industrial buildings as a possible design inspiration.

Ms. Irwin suggested that the applicant look for ways in which the history of the specific can be integrated into the design.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Board of Architectural Review hearing was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

The following projects were administratively approved since the last BAR meeting:

BAR #2020-00600 PG

Request for window and siding replacement at 830 Oronoco Street.

Applicant: Casey Sutherland

BAR #2020-00620 OHAD

Request for alterations at 122 South Fairfax Street.
Applicant: Tom McMurray

BAR #2020-00621 OHAD
Request for window replacement at 1804 West Abingdon Drive #202.
Applicants: Margaret Langer and Joel Agee

BAR #2020-00623 OHAD
Request for door and window replacement at 810 Prince Street.
Applicant: Puscheck LLC

BAR #2020-00624 OHAD
Request for window replacement at 315 South Pitt Street.
Applicant: Peter Verne

BAR #2021-00007 OHAD
Request for repointing at 428 North Washington Street.
Applicant: James Bethard