

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

Board of Architectural Review
Wednesday, February 17, 2021
7:00 p.m., 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: Susan Hellman, 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 February 17, 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 **February 3, 2021** public hearing.

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Submitted

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve the minutes from the February 3, 2021 meeting, as submitted.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR

Removed from Consent Calendar

3. 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: Approved, as Amended

On a motion by Ms. Irwin, and seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2020-00598, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 6-1. Ms. Neihardt opposed.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

- 1- That the gap between the base and the ground be covered or filled.

REASON

Ms. Roberts removed the item from the consent calendar since an opposing letter from the public was received.

In general, the Board found the proposed standalone pole design appropriate and had no objections to the location but had questions about the pole finishing.

SPEAKERS

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

Mr. Craig Miller, resident at 915 Cameron Street, asked Mr. Schakola the dimensions of the equipment box to be mounted on the pole. Mr. Schakola explained that the dimensions are 21.5” D x 22” W x 36.1” H and clarified that the question was referring to other small cell item on the Docket.

Mr. Paul Delay, resident at 511 South Royal Street, stated that he has been living at the location since 1994 and had sent an opposition letter to the Board; he was representing the residents of the 500 block of South Royal Street. He explained that there are only a few utility poles in this block and suggested other possible poles to receive the small cell facility. He also inquired about the existence of an overall strategy plan for the installation of new poles since there are many carriers requiring new poles which can be overwhelming to the city’s blocks.

Ms. Roberts explained that one of the poles suggested by Mr. Delay, across the Wilkes Tunnel, is not appropriate for the small cell facility because it carries a high voltage line.

Mr. Conkey explained that the FCC (Federal Communication Commission) establishes the guidelines for small cell locations and provides that multiple carriers cannot utilize the same pole. In addition, the City cannot mandate different providers to work on a common single plan, but the City has established parameters for the use of public spaces and the number of poles allowed per block as example.

Mr. Schakola added that the other poles suggested by Mr. Delay are out of the carrier target area and that the lack of an overall plan is due to the carriers' speculative locations for small cell facilities. Locations cannot be anticipated, but he is willing to provide a map with all the confirmed locations.

DISCUSSIONS

Ms. Neihardt expressed concern with the number of poles being proposed and the City's standards. Mr. Adams also had questions about the gaps shown on the drawings between the base of the pole and the sidewalk and another on the top of the base and the pole master. Ms. Irwin stated that page 24 of the plans shows that the gap between the top of the base and the pole master being covered by a decorative element which was confirmed by Mr. Schakola, but the gap between the base and the ground did not show any coverage. Mr. Spencer suggested that gap to be filled or covered as a condition of approval, which was accepted by Ms. Irwin, who made the motion to approve the project.

4. BAR #2021-00019 OHAD

Request for alterations at 401 Duke Street.
Applicants: David and Anne Ayres

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Submitted

On a motion by Mr. Sprinkle, and seconded by Ms. Neihardt, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2021-00019, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

Removed from Consent Calendar

5. BAR #2021-00021 PG

Request for alterations at 225 North West Street.
Applicants: Matt and Erica Gray

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Amended

On a motion by Ms. Irwin, and seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2021-00021, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. That the railings be similar to the railings shown on page 32 of the application, not anchored to the building, with a small plate at the bottom of the posts, and the balusters be spaced with the Code's maximum required distance.

REASON

The Board sympathized with the property owner's concerns and found that a simpler guardrail would be stylistically appropriate for the building since similar guardrails are found all over the historic districts and have minimal visual impact on a building's architectural style.

SPEAKERS

Mr. Matt Gray, the property owner, stated that he acquired the property about a year ago and that he has been improving it over time. He would like to install guardrails on the stoop since he and his wife have had a couple of accidents there; thus they want to prevent accidents from happening again.

DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Adams removed the item from the consent calendar since he believes that the simpler railing

shown on some examples in the application can be acceptable as well the ones suggested by staff. They are not associated with any particular era and don't detract from the building's architectural style.

Ms. Roberts agreed that the simpler railings with pickets should be accepted since they do not compromise the architectural style and are all over the historic districts.

Ms. Irwin stated that she thinks that vertical balusters are acceptable as long they are simple, thin, well-spaced with no details, and no cap or finials on the posts as the one shown in the application page 32. Mr. Spencer agreed and added that the examples shown in the application are much lighter than the one proposed by the applicant. He would add to the motion that the number of balusters be limited to the minimum required by Code.

2. BAR #2021-00032 PG

Request for alterations to previously approved plans at 402 North Fayette Street.

Applicant: Andrew Haas

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Submitted

On a motion by Mr. Sprinkle, and seconded by Ms. Neihardt, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2021-00032, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

IV. ITEM PREVIOUSLY DEFERRED BY THE BOARD

3. 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: Denied

On a motion by Mr. Adams, and seconded by Ms. Neihardt, the Board of Architectural Review voted to deny BAR #2020-00553. The motion carried on a vote of 4-3. Ms. Roberts, Ms. Irwin, and Mr. Spencer opposed the motion.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

N/A

REASON

The Board felt that due to the existing pole's proximity to the 215 North Patrick Street property line and the uncertainty of the exact location of the replacement pole, which has a two feet leeway to the north or south of the existing pole, the proposed pole could possibly end up in front of a historically significant property (211 North Patrick Street) or detract from a possible future structure at 215 North Patrick Street. The Board noted that the application is not clear and raised concerns about the potential negative visual effect of the replacement pole and the small cell facility on the significant historic property. They also expressed concern about the noticing requirements; if the replacement pole is placed to the south of the existing, it will be directly across the property at 214 North Patrick Street which was not notified about the project but would be affected by it in that location.

SPEAKERS

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

Mr. Robert Meyers, resident at 311 Alabama Avenue and owner of the property at 222 North Patrick Street, brought up the issue of noticing requirements since he had not received any notification for the proposed project and if the pole replacement were to be placed in a different location, he would never know. He also stated that the 12'-3" height increase plus the height of the antenna, 5'-6" will have a significant visual impact, not only on the property at 215 North Patrick, but on the entire block.

Mr. Jamahl Bracey, property owner and resident at 214 North Patrick, also had concerns about the noticing, claiming the subject pole is directly aligned with his doorstep from which he believes the application's pictures were taken. He feels that he and other neighbors who were not notified will be directly affected by this project. Mr. Bracey said that he is not comfortable with only verbal discussions about the final location of the replacement pole; he thinks that the uncertainty of the final location concerns the residents who will have to live with the small cell in front of their property for a long time.

Mr. Craig Miller, resident and co-owner of the properties 211, 215, and 217 North Patrick Street, stated that there is no 213 North Patrick Street, and that he feels that the proposed project will negatively impact his historic property at 211 North Patrick Street where he resides. He added that the proposed small cell facility will be the tallest approved in the historic district being 13 feet taller than the historic property which violates Article X, Sections (a),(g) and (h) of the City's Zoning Ordinance and therefore must be denied by the BAR. Mr. Miller also clarified that the original site for this facility was at the corner of Cameron and Princess streets. This location was denied by Dominion and therefore 215 North Patrick is not the preferred location for the location of the small cell facility. Mr. Craig also stated that BAR2009-00295 established precedent in referencing the grandness of the property at 211 North Patrick Street and its unique roofline and architecture. He gave a brief summary of the cultural significance of the property saying that the property at 211 North Patrick was the residence of the first African American doctor in Alexandria who lived at the location from 1943 until he passed away in 1985.

Ms. Lisa Brock, co-owner of the properties at 211, 215 and 217A North Patrick Street, stated that she was very concerned with the discrepancies and incomplete information in the application. It omits existing trees that will be affected by the pole replacement, the actual height of the replacement pole seems to be much taller than the 10 foot increase stated in the application, and the actual location of the pole is different on the architectural drawings. She also had concerns about the incomplete information on the utility standards which are not clear. She opposed the project and asked the Board to deny or defer the project.

Mr. Chris Kuhman, resident at 205 North Patrick Street, had concerns about the structural soundness of the new replacement pole, as the street is prone to accidents and he is concerned that a non-sound structure can potentially cause damage to nearby residences in case of an accident.

Mr. Steven Burke, resident at 1007 Cameron Street, stated that his property's rear will be affected by this project and he has concerns about the height of the new pole which will establish a new standard that can be increased through the time. He finds that the height of the replacement pole

is not appropriate for the historic districts.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Roberts clarified that the project was properly noticed as per the City's Zoning Ordinance requirements. Ms. Roberts also stated that the same application was heard at the January 21 hearing and was deferred for restudy to check the possibility of another pole for the small cell facility or a freestanding pole instead. After listening to the public speakers, Ms. Roberts clarified that the 13 feet height increase for this project includes the small cell facility and does not exceed the height limitation of 50 feet, which was confirmed by Mr. Conkey.

Mr. Schakola explained the results of the restudy, clarifying that a standalone pole at the location is not possible due to overhead wires that zig-zag across the street not allowing the necessary safety and signal transmission requirement for horizontal and vertical clearance (10' and 4'-5' respectively). He also stated that the only possible location that would comply with this requirement is the northwestern corner of North Patrick Street, but the location has underground obstructions which makes the standalone pole installation not feasible.

Ms. Sennett had questions about the importance of this block to the network overall plan, and also about the discrepancy on the maps showing the location of the pole since seemed to her that in the application's picture, the replacement pole is clearly to the south of the property line and in front of 211 North Patrick driveway. Mr. Schakola clarified that if the location is not approved, it might signify a gap in the intended service for the area. This particular location is also a capacity site which alleviates overburdened small cell facilities nearby, where the demand for service is intensified especially now that more people are working from home due to COVID-19.

Mr. Adams stated that even though the proposed small cell facility will be on a pole in front of a vacant lot, the lot could be developed in the future and his recollection was that the Board had already discussed that such facilities should not be located in front of any property but in between properties, so that no house will have an antenna in front of its window or front door. He would like staff to consider all the possible locations including the corner of Cameron and Princess which was previously selected as a possible site for this small cell facility. Mr. Adams also brought up that the replacement pole can be placed to the north of the existing and therefore will be in front of a future building or to the south that will be right in front of the historic property (211 North Patrick Street) driveway and not an alley as stated in the application.

Ms. Irwin questioned if the guidelines address trees that are in private properties as well, since the pole replacement could be one or two feet to the north of the location of the existing pole and could affect the existing mature trees in the vacant lot. She also inquired about the possibility to require that the replacement pole be relocated in the south direction instead. Mr. Schakola answered that the location of the replacement pole is up to Dominion and T&ES standards since there are other factors to be considered. Ms. Irwin also clarified to the public speakers who had concerns about the notice requirements, that the Board is restricted to comply with the Zoning Ordinance and that a recommendation to the City Council can be written requesting modifications to these requirements for larger projects.

Mr. Sprinkle added that the noticing issue is relevant since Dominion has a leeway to replace this pole south of the projecting property line which will directly affect the property right across the street that was not noticed, in this case 214 North Patrick Street. He also stated that the staff report

should consider all properties that will have its viewshed affected by the project and not only the property directly across from it. Ms. Roberts concurred and suggested that staff should include in the staff report the location of significant historic properties at least in a 50' radius of the proposed small cell location.

V. NEW BUSINESS

4. BAR #2021-00013 OHAD

Request for partial demolition/ encapsulation at 311 Wolfe Street.
Applicants: Charles Kelley and Elisabeth Pearson

5. BAR #2021-00012 OHAD

Request for addition and alterations at 311 Wolfe Street.
Applicants: Charles Kelley and Elisabeth Pearson

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Submitted

On a motion by Mr. Spencer, and seconded by Mr. Adams, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2021-00012 and BAR #2021-00013, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 6-1. Mr. Sprinkle opposed.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. Include the statements from Alexandria Archaeology, below, in the General Notes of all on all construction documents that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
 - a. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-746-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

REASON

The Board supported the application as submitted with opposition from Mr. Sprinkle.

SPEAKERS

Patrick Camus, project architect, represented the applicant and was available to answer questions.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Sennott asked for clarification regarding the proposed metal grate, which is non-visible from a public right of way.

Mr. Sprinkle questioned if the introduction of a new window and the removal of historic fabric on the primary/south elevation is appropriate.

Mr. Adams said it was odd that there was not a window already in this location. He and Ms. Roberts felt this this new window would be appropriate.

Mr. Spencer noted that this window would provide balance.

6. BAR #2021-00022 OHAD

Request for partial demolition/ encapsulation at 302 South Saint Asaph Street.
Applicant: John Rock, 302 Saint Asaph LLC

7. BAR #2021-00017 OHAD

Request for addition and alterations at 302 South Saint Asaph Street.
Applicant: John Rock, 302 Saint Asaph LLC

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 #2021-00017 and BAR #2021-00022, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Approved as submitted

REASON

The Board supported the application as submitted

SPEAKERS

Robert Guynn, architect with Braswell Design Build, was available to answer questions

No Public Comments

DISCUSSION

Ms. Irwin noted that while the existing kitchen addition may not be original to the building it has gained some amount of historic significance since its original construction date in the 1930's. She asked if there is any remaining historic fabric and if it could be retained.

Mr. Conkey noted that based on site observation, the existing windows and the siding are modern in material and not original to the construction of the addition. He further noted that the construction of the large chimney on the rear wall had removed a significant portion of original material that may have existed.

Mr. Spencer asked the applicant if they were planning to enclose any of the existing windows on the south side of the building. The applicant indicated on a photograph that these had already been enclosed.

Mr. Sprinkle indicated that if Staff determined that there is not sufficient historic material to be retained then he could approve the demolition of the 1930's era addition

8. BAR #2021-00023 OHAD

Request for partial demolition/ encapsulation at 314 Commerce Street.
Applicants: John and Emily Galer

9. BAR #2021-00020 OHAD

Request for alterations at 314 Commerce Street.
Applicants: John and Emily Galer

BOARD ACTION: Deferred

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural Review accepted the request for deferral of BAR #2021-00020 and BAR #2021-00023.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

10. BAR #2021-00048 OHAD

Request for concept review at 805, 809, 811, 815, and 823 North Columbus Street.
Applicants: PT Blooms, LLC, contract purchaser

SPEAKERS

Ken Wire, attorney for the applicant, introduced the project.

Lori Hall, architect with Penney Design Group, presented the design for the project.

Board Questions

Ms. Roberts noted that the current zoning for the site is RB and asked what the proposed zone will be. Mr. Wire responded that the applicant is in the process of working with the City to establish the proposed zone for the project.

Ms. Roberts asked where the proposed open space will be on the site. The applicant responded that the open space will be split between the ground and the rooftops.

Ms. Sennott asked about the design for the wall at the north property line. The applicant responded that the wall is planned to be on the property line and that per the building code there are no windows allowed on the property line.

Ms. Roberts asked for clarification on the proposed vehicular access to the site.

Public Comments

Gail Rothrock, 209 Duke Street, appreciated the effort on the design but was concerned about the location of a five story building in close proximity to lower historic homes. She further stated that she was concerned about the safety of the use of wood frame construction.

The public comment period was closed.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Adams pointed out that the houses on the opposite side of Columbus Street are low scale and felt that the proposed building should step down further towards Columbus Street. He stated that he is not concerned about the inauthenticity of using townhouse elements as a design precedent

for the lower part of the building. This area of the city was a residential area, not industrial so the use of residential architecture as a precedent would be more appropriate. He would like to see greater delineation of the building entry.

Mr. Spencer expressed concern about the use of industrial buildings as a design precedent for the lower portion of the building, he further noted that the proposed proportions are not compatible with the adjacent historic buildings. He stated that he would prefer to see a two story lower portion of the building instead of the proposed three stories. He felt that the proposed building design works with the adjacent hotel but does not work with the residential buildings. He mentioned that he does not feel that the building needs to look like historic townhomes but that it should be compatible with them. The proposed background building is too flat as currently designed and should be different but related to the lower portion of the building. He stated that a stronger entry would help to give a focal point to the building.

Ms. Neihardt stated that she felt that the proposed building is too tall as designed. She agreed that the industrial precedent is not appropriate for this neighborhood. She would like to see additional variation in the design of bays along the lower portion of the building.

Ms. Sennott was concerned about locating a three story portion of the building directly across the street from the low scale historic townhomes. She felt that the proposed building is missing the life and character of the Portner's Landing building that was used as a design precedent. She stated that the building felt like a commercial building in a residential neighborhood.

Ms. Irwin stated that the building needs to have a more defined building entrance. She felt that the lower portion and the background building should be different but should be connected in some way. She asked the architect if the photos in the streetscape are the correct scale because the home across Columbus Street are actually 2 ½ stories and are appearing smaller than that. She suggested that the architect prepare site sections to include these properties to demonstrate the relationship between the proposed building and the smaller townhouses. These drawings could indicate that three stories is appropriate near the 2 ½ story buildings if they are drawn accurately.

Mr. Sprinkle stated that too much of the site open space is on the alley side of the site and that it could be reconfigured to locate the mass of the building adjacent to the hotel and would create a deeper court. He felt that the proposed design is too tall but that through moving the building closer to the hotel the applicant could maintain the building density.

Ms. Roberts had concerns about the height relative to the townhouses on the opposite side of Columbus Street and suggested that the applicant add variation to the proximity of the building to the sidewalk. She agreed with Mr. Sprinkle that the massing of the building should be shifted towards the hotel to free up space along Columbus Street. She asked the applicant to propose a building that does not pretend to have historic and new elements.

Mr. Sprinkle suggested that the applicant look to educational buildings that were previously located in the area as a possible design precedent that has a direct connection to the site.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The Board of Architectural Review hearing was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

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

BAR #2021-00011 OHAD

Request for window replacement at 707 South Lee Street.

Applicant: James Szostek

BAR #2021-00016 OHAD

Request for door replacement at 309 Franklin Street.

Applicant: Mary Beth Long

BAR #2021-00025 OHAD

Request for garage replacement at 801 South Pitt Street.

Applicant: Saint Asaph Square Condominium

BAR #2021-00045 PG

Request for window replacement at 1020 Queen Street.

Applicant: Adam Hernandez

BAR #2021-00050 OHAD

Request for roof replacement at 733 South Pitt Street.

Applicant: Rebecca Maggard

BAR #2021-00055 OHAD

Request for fencing at 610 South Lee Street.

Applicant: Cayley Tullman

BAR #2021-00056 PG

Request for repointing at 119 South Henry Street.

Applicant: Paul Swartz

BAR #2021-00063 OHAD

Request for lantern replacement at 309 Wolfe Street.

Applicant: Michelle Patterson