

**\*\*\*\*\*DRAFT MINUTES\*\*\*\*\***

Board of Architectural Review

**Thursday, July 29, 2021**

7:00 pm, Council Chamber, City Hall

301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Zoom Registration URL: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_3lUiB\\_57T2ui1knfkkNX6w](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3lUiB_57T2ui1knfkkNX6w)

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: James Spencer, Vice Chair  
Christine Roberts, Chair  
Robert Adams  
Purvi Irwin  
John Sprinkle  
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 hybrid hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Adams, Mr. Sprinkle, and Ms. Sennott attended virtually. All other members were present in person.

**II. MINUTES**

2. Reapproval and ratification of the meeting minutes of Board of Architectural Review meetings from April 22, 2020 through June 2, 2021.

**BOARD ACTION: Approved**

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve reapproval and ratification of the meeting minutes of Board of Architectural Review meetings from April 22, 2020 through June 2, 2021, except for the January 21, 2021 minutes.

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural requested deferral of the January 21, 2021 minutes.

**III. ITEMS PREVIOUSLY DEFERRED**

3. **BAR #2021-00341 OHAD** (Translation services from English to Amharic will be provided.)  
Request for new construction at 431 South Columbus Street, 416 South Alfred Street, 900 Wolfe Street and 450 South Patrick Street.  
Applicant: Heritage at Old Town PropCo LLC

**BOARD ACTION: Deferred**

On a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Ms. Sennott, the Board of Architectural Review voted to defer BAR #2021-00341, for a restudy. The motion carried on a vote of 5-2. Mr. Sprinkle and Ms. Neihardt opposed.

**REASON**

The Board provided feedback on the proposed design and asked the applicant to make significant revisions to the design in response to these comments and return to the Board with these modifications.

**SPEAKERS**

Cathy Puskar, attorney with Walsh Colucci, represented the applicant and introduced the project and answered questions.

Chase Eatherly, architect with Hord Coplan Macht, gave an overview of the project.

Ryan Kautz, architect with Hord Coplan Macht, presented the revised design for the project.

The Board asked questions of the applicant regarding the design for Block 1, answers were provided by Ryan Kautz and Chase Eatherly.

Ms. Roberts asked the applicant to walk them through the materials boards to understand which materials were proposed to be used in which locations. Chase Eatherly reviewed the proposed materials.

Mr. Sprinkle asked the applicant how the proposed design compares to provided building precedents in terms of ratios between solids and voids on the elevations and how the proposed design relates to the South Alfred Street Baptist Church. Ryan Kautz responded that the precedent images were provided as a means of understanding design inspiration and not as designs to be directly reproduced. Mr. Sprinkle noted that he wants to see specific percentages for precedent and proposed designs.

Ms. Roberts asked the applicant to leave the materials boards with staff to allow those members who participated remotely to review the boards in person prior to the next hearing. The applicant agreed to the request.

There were no specific Board questions regarding the Block 2 design.

Ms. Roberts summarized the relevant comments from the letters that were received by the Board prior to the hearing. Subjects included in these comments included concerns about the height and scale of the buildings, the lack of historic interpretation in the proposed building design, concerns that the proposed design was too contemporary, and that the buildings overwhelm the neighborhood.

At this time comments from the public were made.

Kay Morell, 421 South Columbus, expressed a desire for there to be a balance between the need for affordable housing and compatibility with the historic district. She felt that the project as

proposed is too large and is not consistent with the Small Area Plan.

Judith Bishop, 431 South Columbus, asked that the Board consider the needs of the residents of the buildings and the living conditions.

Yvonne Callahan, 735 South Lee Street, stated that the buildings have not changed significantly since the first concept hearing. The applicant needs to look at the ratio of solid to void on the elevations and how they relate to the historic context. She also felt that the mews is not a significant addition to the building to deal with the overall size.

Ellen Mosher, representing Old Town Civic Association, 324 North Alfred Street, shared a presentation showing that the proposed buildings overwhelm the neighborhood and would be more appropriate for Balston or Baltimore than the historic district. She further demonstrated that the proposal is not consistent with the Small Area Plan.

Gerry Baldwin, resident of Heritage, was in support of the proposal and felt that the redevelopment would allow more people to be able to afford to live in the area.

Gail Rothrock, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, stated that the project is a departure from the Design Guidelines and is not in compliance with the Small Area Plan. She felt that the application should be denied because the building is not compatible with others on the blockface and overwhelms the neighboring buildings. She felt that the building should be smaller.

Danny Smith, representing HARC, was concerned that the height, mass, and scale of the buildings are out of character with the neighborhood and that they would be more appropriate for a suburban setting. He stated that the South Patrick Street elevation is an important gateway to the historic district and that the BAR should apply the highest possible standards. He reminded the Board that there are important African American sites within the immediate neighborhood.

Cecily Crandall, 819 Queen Street, agreed with previous speakers and asked for greater variation in the architectural features to include arches or curves.

William DeWayne, 817 Duke Street, agreed with previous speakers concerns about the compatibility of the proposed design with the historic district.

Chris Morell, 421 South Columbus Street, stated that the proposed 7 story buildings would dominate the surrounding neighborhood and that the proposed buildings are too tall and too large. He further stated that the proposed fenestration pattern is not consistent with the historic district. He was concerned the loss of emergency vehicle easements due to the proposed buildings would lead to shorter response times.

## **DISCUSSION**

Ms. Puskar stated that they had read the staff report and agreed with the comments and requested a deferral in order to address these comments and any provided by the Board.

Mr. Sprinkle asked the applicant for numerical relationships between solid and void on the elevations of the proposed building as compared to the presented design precedents. He also asked

for a comparison of the proposed design to the Alfred Street Baptist Church. He asked the applicant to provide historic precedent for some of the specific architectural features contained in the design such as the metal box bays. He referenced the Design Guidelines statement that residential townhomes should be 25'-30' wide and how does the proposed design meet this requirement. He stated again that the proposed building includes only flat roof and window heads.

Mr. Adams stated that the proposed design is more appropriate for North Old Town than the historic district. He found it to be inconsistent with the historic district that all building forms are orthogonal. He would like to see the introduction of gable roofs and other forms to make the building less boxy.

Ms. Sennott appreciated the changes made to the design since the previous hearing but felt that the building height and scale are too large for the neighborhood.

Ms. Neihardt was concerned about the mass and scale of the project and felt that the various renditions that have been submitted lacked creativity. She felt that that project should be broken up into multiple buildings. She was concerned about the balance between the drive for affordable housing and the preservation of the historic district.

Mr. Spencer stated that he wanted to see an architecture that is dedicated to the specific place and felt that the proposed building could be located anywhere in the DC Metro area.

Ms. Irwin appreciated the new views and liked the additional detailing that has been added to the project. She would like to see the history of the site woven into the design for the building instead of only on interpretive elements. She stated that the location of the building on the edge of the district makes this a unique site that is not a precedent for the entire district. She did not support the idea of making the building look historic, the building should be compatible with the old buildings but with a clearly modern design.

Ms. Irwin made a motion to accept the applicant's request for a deferral. The motion was seconded by Mr. Spencer. The motion failed on a vote of 4-3.

Ms. Neihardt made a motion to deny the application. The motion was not seconded.

Mr. Sprinkle noted that the project has not been significantly changed in the 4 concept reviews and the Certificate of Appropriateness submission.

Mr. Sprinkle made a motion to deny the application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Neihardt.

Ms. Irwin stated that a denial at this time would abdicate the Board's responsibility to be involved in the production of a design that is compatible with the historic district.

Ms. Roberts noted that the Board grants request for deferral from applicants to allow them to respond to Board comments on a regular basis and that it would be a departure from precedent for the Board to deny this request for a deferral.

Mr. Spencer noted that a denial would take the Board out of the design process.

Mr. Adams stated that the Board's continued involvement in the process would be beneficial to

the project.

Mr. Adams made a substitute motion to the previous motion from Mr. Sprinkle to accept the applicant's request for deferral and requested that significant changes be made to the design prior to the next hearing. The substitute motion was seconded by Ms. Sennott.

After discussion regarding this motion, the Chair called for a vote, the motion passed by a vote of 5-2.

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

The Board of Architectural Review hearing was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

#### **V. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS**

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

BAR #2021-00377 OHAD

Request for minor amendment at 721 South Alfred Street.

Applicant: name withdrawn

BAR #2021-00378 OHAD

Request for accessory structure at 418 South Pitt Street.

Applicant: Kevin Coyne

BAR #2021-00385 OHAD

Request for alterations at 517 Prince Street.

Applicant: City of Alexandria

BAR #2021-00386 OHAD

Request for alterations at 1250 South Washington Street.

Applicant: Jowan Borrja

BAR #2021-00390 OHAD

Request for fence replacement at 513 South Lee Street.

Applicant: Harry Mahon

BAR #2021-00393 PG

Request for alterations at 1321 Cameron Street.

Applicant: ZNB, LLC

BAR #2021-00394 OHAD

Request for signage at 113 South Columbus Street.

Applicant: Old Town LLC