

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *ps*

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE LIST OF BLIGHTING INFLUENCES IN POTOMAC EAST AND POTOMAC WEST

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of Amendments to the List of Blighting Influences in Potomac East and Potomac West.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the City Council:

1. Approve the deletion of four properties from the currently approved List of Blighting Influences in Potomac East and Potomac West; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to enter into contracts for the purchase of properties on the Blighting Influences List if it becomes necessary to acquire such properties because of the failure of the owners to comply with the program's guidelines.

**BACKGROUND:** The purpose of the Blighting Influences Program is to encourage the removal of blight by requiring owners of blighted properties to make needed improvements. Once a property is added to the Blighting Influences List, the owner is sent a 60/60 Day Notice which states that the owner has 60 days to obtain building permits to complete the necessary repairs to the property and to submit a rehabilitation schedule to the Office of Housing, and an additional 60 days to begin rehabilitation of the property. These 60-day periods may be extended for circumstances which prevent an owner from complying with the established time limits (e.g., insurance claim settlement, estate settlement, loan application process, zoning approval, permit approval, owner's health).

Office of Housing staff monitors the rehabilitation progress of properties included on the Blighting Influences List. Properties are noncompliant when the owners fail to comply with the terms of the 60/60 Day Notice, or fail to pursue completion of the rehabilitation. City staff contacts the owners of properties in noncompliance and encourages them to resume rehabilitation activity.

If an owner refuses to resume rehabilitation activity, the City initiates acquisition proceedings against the property. The City commissions an independent general real estate appraiser to ascertain the property's value, and issues an offer to purchase the property. If the owner accepts the offer, the

City acquires the property. If the offer is rejected, and the owner still refuses to resume rehabilitation activity, City Council is asked to approve a resolution authorizing acquisition of the property through its power of eminent domain. Once Council approves such a resolution, the City Attorney institutes eminent domain proceedings and the property is eventually acquired.

Acquired properties may be: (1) rehabilitated by the City under the Blighting Influences Program for sale to a low/moderate-income family under the City's Homeownership Assistance Program; (2) sold to a party in the private sector in "As Is" condition for rehabilitation and/or redevelopment; or (3) used as a public facility or sold or leased to a non-profit corporation for a City-supported purpose. A description of the program and a summary of program activity to date are provided in Attachment I.

**DISCUSSION:** No properties are being recommended for addition to the List of Blighting Influences during this List update. The properties proposed for continuation on and deletion from the currently approved List of Blighting Influences are listed in Attachment II (Potomac East Conservation and Southwest Quadrant Rehabilitation Districts) and Attachment III (Potomac West Neighborhood Strategy Area). A status report on the properties proposed for continuation on the currently approved List of Blighting Influences is provided in Attachment V (Status of Properties Continuing on the List of Blighting Influences from Former Years). We are recommending the deletion of four properties in Potomac West, since they have been rehabilitated and are no longer blighting influences as detailed in the supporting documentation section of this report (Attachment IV):

525 East Alexandria Avenue  
35 East Bellefonte Avenue  
31 East Linden Street  
106 East Reed Avenue

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- I. Background and Summary of Program to Date
- II. Summary of Blighting Influences - Potomac East
- III. Summary of Blighting Influences - Potomac West
- IV. Supporting Documentation
- V. Status of Properties Continuing on the List of Blighting Influences from Former Years

**STAFF:**

Mildrilyn Stephens Davis, Director, Office of Housing  
Robert E. Mulderig, Deputy Director, Office of Housing  
Shane Cochran, Chief, Program Implementation Division, Office of Housing  
Arthur C. Thomas, Real Estate Officer, Office of Housing  
Arthur D. Dahlberg, Director, Code Enforcement  
Quentin E. Tabscott, Inspector, Code Enforcement

## BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF PROGRAM TO DATE

### I. Semi-Annual Procedures for Updating the Vacant and Boarded Program List

The Code Enforcement Bureau is responsible for the preparation of the list of additions to and deletions from the currently approved List of Blighting Influences in the Potomac East Conservation and Southwest Quadrant Rehabilitation Districts and the Potomac West Neighborhood Strategy Area (NSA). Prior to a reorganization of Code Enforcement functions in 1984, the Alexandria Health Department performed this function.

In 1986, the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee and City Council approved an amendment to the Blighting Influences Program to provide for semi-annual additions to and deletions from the Blighting Influences List. Previously, the Blighting Influences List was updated annually. Properties to be added to the List must have been placarded and/or ordered secured by January 31 and July 31 of each year.

Properties are recommended for deletion from the List after they have been rehabilitated or demolished, and cleared by the Code Enforcement Bureau. In addition, properties which have not been completely rehabilitated may be recommended for deletion from the List if circumstances are such that the blight has been removed.

### II. Removal of Blight

Owners of all properties added to the Blighting Influences List receive notices giving them deadlines to obtain building permits and begin rehabilitation. The Office of Housing monitors the progress of the rehabilitation (or demolition) efforts. If an owner's actions are not satisfactory, the Office of Housing then takes steps to acquire the property. Additionally, Blighting Influences List properties which have at least one year of outstanding real estate taxes, will be referred to the Finance Department for tax foreclosure.

### III. Program Progress

Since the Blighting Influences Program (formerly the Vacant and Boarded Program) was first approved by City Council in December 1975, 383 residential and commercial properties have been placed on the List of Blighting Influences in the Potomac East and Potomac West areas of the City for possible acquisition and subsequent resale. As of this List update, 334 properties have been rehabilitated (or demolished) by the owners, 2 properties have been eliminated by a program or boundary change, 37 properties have been acquired by the City and 10 properties are currently being monitored by the City to effect the elimination of blight by their owners.

The following is a status report on the 37 properties acquired by the City to date:

- A. Twelve properties acquired under this program fall under the "Rehabilitation for Resale to Low- and Moderate - Income Family" program. These properties were rehabilitated or demolished and rebuilt, and then sold to low- and moderate-income families.

- B. Three properties were subdivided to create a total of eight new or rehabilitated properties. In two cases, two properties were created from one, and in the third case, four properties resulted from one. All were sold to low- and moderate-income families.
- C. Two adjacent former blighting influences were combined and rehabilitated for the City's Battered Women's Shelter.
- D. The site of a former Potomac West gas station was acquired and resold by the City to a developer, who constructed nine housing units on this site.
- E. Seventeen properties acquired under this program fall under the "As Is" resale program. Sixteen of these properties were sold and have been rehabilitated or demolished. One property has been sold and is being rehabilitated.
- F. One property was rehabilitated for use as a State licensed home for elderly persons. The City also used program funds to acquire the adjacent structure, which was not on the Blighting Influences List, to create one large home from the two adjoining properties.
- G. The W&OD right-of-way is currently used as a park and recreational area.

Through the implementation of the Blighting Influences Program, including the "As Is" resale program, the City has played an important role in the elimination of blight in the Potomac East and Potomac West areas of the City and has provided housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. The success and importance of this program have also been recognized by the Virginia Municipal League which chose the Blighting Influences Program (formerly the Vacant and Boarded Program) as the recipient of its 1980 Annual Achievement Award for the State.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE LIST OF BLIGHTING  
INFLUENCES IN THE POTOMAC EAST CONSERVATION AND SOUTHWEST  
QUADRANT REHABILITATION DISTRICTS - MARCH 2001

- I. Potomac East Conservation District
  - A. Vacant and Boarded Residential Structures
    - 1. Continuing from former years:
      - 437 Earl Street
      - 329½ North Henry Street
      - 1024 Queen Street
      - 1311 Queen Street
      - 1018 Wythe Street
      - 1020 Wythe Street
    - 2. Additions:
      - None
    - 3. Deletions:
      - None
  - B. Other Blighting Influences
    - 1. Continuing from former years:
      - None
    - 2. Additions:
      - None
    - 3. Deletions:
      - None

- II. Southwest Quadrant Rehabilitation District
  - A. Vacant and Boarded Residential Structures
    - 1. Continuing from former years:
      - None
    - 2. Additions:
      - None
    - 3. Deletions:
      - None
  - B. Other Blighting Influences
    - 1. Continuing from former years:
      - None
    - 2. Additions:
      - None
    - 3. Deletions:
      - None

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE LIST OF BLIGHTING  
INFLUENCES IN THE POTOMAC WEST NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGY  
AREA - MARCH 2001

- I. Potomac West Conservation District
  - A. Vacant and Boarded Residential Structures
    - 1. Continuing from former years:
      - 3802 Edison Street
      - 332 Wesmond Drive
    - 2. Additions:
      - None
    - 3. Deletions:
      - 35 East Bellefonte Avenue
      - 106 East Reed Avenue
  - B. Other Blighting Influences
    - 1. Continuing from former years:
      - None
    - 2. Additions:
      - None
    - 3. Deletions:
      - None
- II. Potomac West Rehabilitation District
  - A. Vacant and Boarded Residential Structures
    - 1. Continuing from former years:
      - 103 Adams Avenue
    - 2. Additions:
      - None
    - 3. Deletions:
      - 525 East Alexandria Avenue
      - 31 East Linden Street
  - B. Other Blighting Influences
    - 1. Continuing from former years:
      - None
    - 2. Additions:
      - None
    - 3. Deletions:
      - None
- III. Remainder of Potomac West
  - A. Vacant and Boarded Residential Structures
    - 1. Continuing from former years:
      - 3821 Elbert Avenue
      - 2921 Landover Street
    - 2. Additions:
      - None
    - 3. Deletions:
      - None

B. Other Blighting Influences

1. Continuing from former years:

None

2. Additions:

None

3. Deletions:

None

DOCUMENTATION CONCERNING CONDITIONS OF THE PROPERTIES PROPOSED  
FOR ADDITION TO AND DELETION FROM THE LIST OF BLIGHTING INFLUENCES

PROPERTIES TO BE DELETED FROM THE CURRENTLY APPROVED LIST  
OF BLIGHTING INFLUENCES STRUCTURES

ADDRESS	DATE ADDED TO BLIGHTING INFLUENCES LIST	DATE CLEARED BY CODE ENFORCEMENT	DATE OF LAST INSPECTION
<p>POTOMAC EAST <u>Conservation District</u></p> <p>None</p>			
<p><u>Southwest Quadrant Rehabilitation District</u></p> <p>None</p>			
<p>POTOMAC WEST <u>Conservation District</u></p> <p>35 E. Bellefonte Avenue 106 E. Reed Avenue</p>	<p>9/16/00 3/18/00</p>	<p>9/22/00 11/16/00</p>	<p>9/22/00 11/16/00</p>
<p><u>Rehabilitation District</u></p> <p>525 E. Alexandria Avenue 31 E. Linden Street</p>	<p>6/14/00 9/16/00</p>	<p>1/24/01 11/22/00</p>	<p>1/24/01 11/22/00</p>
<p><u>Remainder of Potomac West</u></p> <p>None</p>			



Arthur D. Dahlberg  
Director

*City of Alexandria, Virginia*

*Code Enforcement*

*P. O. Box 178  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313*



Office  
703-838-4360

Fax  
703-838-3880

September 26, 2000

Margarie Davis and Eva Coakley  
35 East Bellefonte Avenue  
Alexandria, Virginia 22305

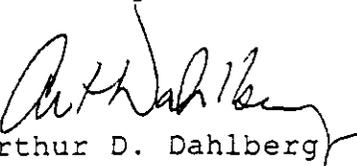
Dear Ms. Davis and Ms. Coakley:

A reinspection of your property at 35 East Bellefonte Avenue, by Inspector Pat Walker on **September 22, 2000**, revealed that all violations which led to the declaration of your property as unfit for human habitation have been corrected.

The property is now suitable for habitation.

Should you have any questions please call Inspector Walker at (703) 838-4644, ext. 122.

Sincerely,

  
Arthur D. Dahlberg  
Director

cc: Charles E. Samarra, Police Chief  
Jim Gower, Deputy Fire Chief  
Arthur Thomas, Office of Housing  
Mary Bryant, Supervisor, Existing Structures  
Quentin Tabscott, Inspector, Existing Structures  
Michael Conner, Chief Fire Marshal



Arthur D. Dahlberg  
Director

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

Code Enforcement

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November 17, 2000

Ms. Valencia Husain  
2143 Leon Road  
Jacksonville, Florida 32246

Dear Ms. Husain:

A reinspection of your property at 106 East Reed Avenue, by Inspector Lawmaster on **November 16, 2000**, revealed that all violations which led to the declaration of your property as unfit for human habitation have been corrected.

The property is now suitable for habitation.

Should you have any questions please call Inspector Lawmaster at (703) 838-4644, ext. 140.

Sincerely,

  
Arthur D. Dahlberg  
Director

cc: Charles E. Samarra, Police Chief  
Jim Gower, Deputy Fire Chief  
Arthur Thomas, Office of Housing  
Mary Bryant, Supervisor, Existing Structures  
Quentin Tabscott, Inspector, Existing Structures  
Michael Conner, Chief Fire Marshal

NOTE: We reserve the right to reinspect the property every three months to ensure the basement remains secure and is not occupied. This process shall continue until such time as the basement is fully restored to a habitable condition.



Arthur D. Dahlberg  
Director

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

Code Enforcement

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January 31, 2001

Mr. Robert Trefry  
525 East Alexandria Avenue  
Alexandria, Virginia 22305

Dear Mr. Trefry:

A reinspection of your property at 525 East Alexandria Avenue, by Inspector Pat Walker on **January 24, 2001**, revealed that all violations which led to the declaration of your property as unfit for human habitation have been corrected.

The property is now suitable for habitation.

Should you have any questions please call Inspector Pat Walker at (703) 838-4644, ext. 122.

Sincerely,

Arthur D. Dahlberg  
Director

cc: Charles E. Samarra, Police Chief  
Jim Gower, Deputy Fire Chief  
Arthur Thomas, Office of Housing  
Mary Bryant, Supervisor, Existing Structures  
Quentin Tabscott, Inspector, Existing Structures ✓  
Michael Conner, Chief Fire Marshal



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Director

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703-838-3880

November 29, 2000

Ms. Jean Campbell  
6513 Tower Drive, #T-2  
Alexandria, Virginia 22306

Dear Ms. Campbell:

A reinspection of your property at 31 East Linden Street, by Inspector Pat Walker on **November 22, 2000**, revealed that all violations which led to the declaration of your property as unfit for human habitation have been corrected.

The property is now suitable for habitation.

Should you have any questions please call Inspector Pat Walker at (703) 838-4644, ext. 122.

Sincerely,

Arthur D. Dahlberg  
Director

cc: Charles E. Samarra, Police Chief  
Jim Gower, Deputy Fire Chief  
Arthur Thomas, Office of Housing  
Mary Bryant, Supervisor, Existing Structures  
Quentin Tabscott, Inspector, Existing Structures  
Michael Conner, Chief Fire Marshal

STATUS OF PROPERTIES CONTINUING ON THE LIST OF BLIGHTING INFLUENCES  
FROM FORMER YEARS

I. POTOMAC EAST NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGY AREA PROPERTIES

437 Earl Street	
Added to BI List:	March 1997
Current Status:	In-Compliance
Progress:	This property suffered interior water damage as a result of a failed roof system. The owner has had the roof replaced and interior repairs were initiated. On January 22, 2001, the owner obtained a building permit and instructed the contractor to complete the interior repairs at this property.
Projected Clearance:	September 2001
Items to Complete:	Completion of interior repairs.
329½ N. Henry Street	
Added to BI List:	March 1994
Current Status:	In-Compliance
Progress:	This property was acquired by the City in 1999. The Alexandria Circuit Court awarded title to this property to the City and determined just compensation for the property to be \$36,000. This property was then sold in "As Is" condition to Mike Landi. Mr. Landi is to complete rehabilitation of this property by July 2001.
Projected Clearance:	July 2001
Items to Complete:	"As Is" Purchaser to rehabilitation this property by July 2001.
1024 Queen Street	
Added to BI List:	September 1989
Current Status:	In-Compliance
Progress:	Acquisition proceedings have been suspended against this property. The owner continues to make rehabilitation progress at this property. Rehabilitation is projected to be complete in early 2001.
Projected Clearance:	May 2001
Items to Complete:	Owner to complete rehabilitation.
1311 Queen Street	
Added to BI List:	September 2000
Current Status:	In-Compliance
Progress:	The owners' contractor has obtained building permits and is making progress toward the rehabilitation of this property. Rehabilitation of this structure is anticipated to be complete in June 2001.
Projected Clearance:	June 2001
Items to Complete:	Complete repairs and obtain certificate of occupancy.

1018 Wythe Street  
Added to BI List: March 1989  
Current Status: In Compliance  
Progress: Acquisition proceedings against this property have been suspended. Patrick Monahan has obtained building permits to complete the rehabilitation of this property. Rehabilitation of this property had been delayed pending the demolition of 1022 Wythe Street. 1022 Wythe Street has been demolished and rehabilitation of 1018 Wythe Street has resumed and is expected to be completed by May 2001.  
Projected Clearance: May 2001  
Items to Complete: System finals and interior finishes.

1020 Wythe Street  
Added to BI List: March 1989  
Current Status: In Compliance  
Progress: Acquisition proceedings against this property have been suspended. Patrick Monahan has obtained building permits to complete the rehabilitation of this property. Rehabilitation of this property had been delayed pending the demolition of 1022 Wythe Street. 1022 Wythe Street has been demolished and rehabilitation of 1020 Wythe Street has resumed and is expected to be completed by May 2001.  
Projected Clearance: May 2001  
Items to Complete: System finals and interior finishes.

## II. POTOMAC WEST NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGY AREA PROPERTIES

103 Adams Avenue  
Added to BI List: September 2000  
Current Status: In-Compliance  
Progress: A guardian has been appointed for this owner. The guardian is going to address the fire loading and code violation present in this structure.  
Projected Clearance: September 2001  
Items to Complete: Removal of fire loading and interior repairs.

3802 Edison Street  
Added to BI List: September 2000  
Current Status: In-Compliance  
Progress: This property was recently purchased at foreclosure. The new owner has obtained a building permit and commenced rehabilitation work. Rehabilitation of this structure is anticipated to be complete in May 2001.  
Projected Clearance: May 2001  
Items to Complete: Complete repairs and obtain certificate of occupancy.

3821 Elbert Avenue  
Added to BI List:  
Current Status:  
Progress:

September 1999  
In-Compliance

The owner of this property, with the assistance of her attorney and architect, is reviewing alternatives to rehabilitating the existing structure. If feasible, the existing structure may be razed and a new structure erected. If not feasible, the existing structure will be rehabilitated. Demolition or rehabilitation of this structure is anticipated to be complete in December 2001.

Projected Clearance:  
Items to Complete:

December 2001  
Complete feasibility review. Complete packing and storage. Secure contractor and demolish or rehabilitate structure.

2921 Landover Street  
Added to BI List:  
Current Status:  
Progress:

March 2000  
In-Compliance

The daughter of the owner of this property has decided to sell the property in it current condition. The owner's personal belongings are being removed. The property will be listed with a local real estate company in late February or March 2001.

Projected Clearance:  
Items to Complete:

October 2001  
Complete interior repairs and obtain certificate of occupancy.

332 Wesmond Drive  
Added to BI List:  
Current Status:  
Progress:

September 2000  
In-Compliance

The owner of this property is soliciting bid from contractors to complete the rehabilitating at this property. Rehabilitation of this structure is anticipated to be complete in September 2001.

Projected Clearance:  
Items to Complete:

September 2001  
Complete repairs and obtain certificate of occupancy.