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March 16, 2001

HAND DELIVERED

Ms. Eileen Fogarty
Director of Planning & Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Special Use Permit #2000-0031; Archstone - Cameron Station

Dear Eileen:

Thank you for transmitting the draft conditions for the Archstone development special use permit last Friday. Having an opportunity to review the proposed conditions in advance of the final staff report helps us understand the issues and allows us to communicate our concerns.

The Archstone team is reviewing the draft conditions in detail to determine which conditions are feasible and we look forward to meeting with you next week. We will, of course, strive to comply with these conditions to the extent possible. Prior to these discussions, we believe it is important to present our perspective on how the review process has evolved.

The pre-filing meeting for this development was held in April 2000. The application was filed in June 2000. Since the filing, we have had at least 10 meetings with staff and received 3 sets of written comments. The most recent comments preceding the current conditions were contained in a memo dated January 12, 2001. Each set of comments added new requirements.

In response to the staff comments received over the last year, the plan has been revised 6 times and formally re-submitted 3 times. Many of the changes were requested to meet the staff's interpretation of the CDD guidelines and the comments of the Director of Code Enforcement regarding preferred fire access. Given that the staff will not permit emergency access on or across the trail on the southern side of the building or the park on the west side, the applicant has worked diligently with Mr. Dahlberg to adequately address fire and emergency access issues.

During this same period we met many times with Cameron Station neighbors living on Tancreti Lane and have made substantial changes to the elevation along Tancreti Lane and have received their written support of this project. I am attaching a copy of the written agreement Archstone has signed with the homeowners and request that the conditions of this agreement be incorporated in the final staff conditions. In our prior submissions of the development plan we have incorporated these conditions, so the only "new" conditions are the

Ms. Eileen Fogarty
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Page 2

requirement for access controls on exterior entrances, landscaping during the construction phase and the proposed Declaration of Covenants.

In addition to the revisions related to CDD Guidelines, fire access and Tancreti Homeowner concerns, Archstone has made many changes to address staff concerns about building design. These include increasing setbacks from streets, consolidating and increasing open space, articulating building facades, and revising and realigning both points of access. These were not stated requirements of the CDD Guidelines and, from our perspective, were not predictable when we began the process. The combination of these changes has resulted in a loss of 47 units from our initial submission and substantially increased construction costs. Archstone agreed to the changes discussed in our last meeting with the understanding that a compromise had been reached regarding the site layout and building design. We understood that staff would likely request additional architectural detailing, but that the building massing was acceptable.

The draft conditions received on Friday March 9th require an additional 5 breaks and 2 deep setbacks in the proposed buildings. This would split our 3 proposed buildings into 9 buildings and result in the loss of 32 more units for a total net loss of 79 units. The draft conditions also require that a substantial portion of the parking, which is already embedded behind the buildings, be placed underground. We believe that all other parking in Cameron Station is above-grade, except for the Brookdale proposal, which is providing 70% fewer parking spaces and is high-rise construction. The parking structure and current building layout have already been designed to minimize the visibility of the parking structure from all public streets, the elementary school and the other homes in Cameron Station. The draft conditions also would require the applicant to provide parking at a ratio that is 25% above ordinance requirements and 10% above that which is required pursuant to the CDD Guidelines and imposed on all other development in Cameron Station.

Archstone has consistently tried to comply with all of the staff recommendations and will continue to proceed with this goal. However, the cumulative impact of all the prior changes prohibits Archstone's ability to further reduce the number of units or to place parking underground.

We continue to believe that the Archstone proposal is a benefit to Cameron Station. We are proposing lower height and less residential density than what was approved in the CDD Conceptual Plan; we are providing fewer curb cuts, more landscaping and more architectural detailing than what many residents expected; and we will offer a greater diversity of housing options to complement what has been built in Cameron Station.

Ms. Eileen Fogarty
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March 16, 2001
Page 3

When Archstone began this planning process one year ago, they relied on the adopted CDD guidelines to draft a plan that balanced land costs, construction costs, design guidelines and approved residential density with projected revenues. They have accepted the new requirements that have been presented during each round of prior staff review. However, I hope you can understand that many of the new requirements presented in the draft conditions on Friday March 9th are not feasible, despite our best good faith efforts in working with the staff for the past 11 months.

Sincerely,



Jonathan P. Rak

Enclosure

cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council (w/o encl.)
Chairman and Members of the Planning Commission (w/o encl.)
Tancreti Lane Homeowners (w/o encl.)
Mr. Jon Wallenstrom (w/o encl.)
Mr. Jeff Harris (w/o encl.)
Mr. Ahmad H. Abdul-Baki (w/o encl.)
Mr. Jim Duczynski (w/o encl.)

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