

City of Alexandria, Virginia

19
3-12-02

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 1, 2002

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

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

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council approve the deletion of one property from the currently approved List of Blighting Influences in Potomac East and Potomac West.

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 informs them that they have: (1) 60 days to obtain building permits to complete the necessary repairs to their property and to submit a rehabilitation schedule to the Office of Housing; and (2) an additional 60 days to begin rehabilitation of their property. These 60 day periods may be extended for circumstances (insurance claim settlement, estate settlement, loan application process, owner's health, etc.) which prevent an owner from complying within the established time limits.

Office of Housing staff monitors rehabilitation progress of properties included on the Blighting Influences List. Failure of the owners to comply with the terms of the 60/60 Day Notice or failure to pursue the completion of rehabilitation will place the property in noncompliance. Owners of properties in noncompliance are contacted and encouraged to resume rehabilitation activity.

If an owner refuses to resume rehabilitation activity, acquisition proceedings are initiated against the property. An independent general real estate appraiser is commissioned to ascertain the property's value. An offer to purchase the property is issued to the owner. If accepted, 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 the acquisition of the property through its power of eminent domain. Once a Resolution is approved the City Attorney institutes eminent domain proceedings and acquires the property.

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 the private sector in "As Is" condition for rehabilitation-redevelopment; or 3) transferred to a City agency for use as a public facility or sale or lease 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 one property in Potomac West, since it has been rehabilitated and is no longer a blighting influences as detailed in the supporting documentation section of this report (Attachment IV): 332 Wesmond Drive.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

STAFF:

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

ATTACHMENTS:

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

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, properties on the Blighting Influences List, 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, 386 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, 339 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 8 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 2002

I. Potomac East Conservation District

A. Vacant and Boarded Residential Structures

1. Continuing from former years:

622½ North Alfred Street

1733 Cameron Street

437 Earl Street

329½ North Henry Street

1024 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 2002

- I. Potomac West Conservation District
 - A. Vacant and Boarded Residential Structures
 - 1. Continuing from former years:
None
 - 2. Additions:
None
 - 3. Deletions:
332 Wesmond Drive
 - 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:
None
 - 2. Additions:
None
 - 3. Deletions:
None
 - 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
2930 Hickory Street
 - 2. Additions:
None
 - 3. Deletions:
None

B. Other Blighting Influences

1. Continuing from former years:

None

2. Additions:

None

3. Deletions:

None

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



City of Alexandria, Virginia

Code Enforcement

P. O. Box 178

Alexandria, Virginia 22313



Arthur D. Dahlberg
Director

Office
703-838-4360

Fax
703-838-3880

August 21, 2001

Mr. Burrell Williams
3413 Radnor Place
Falls Church, Virginia 22042

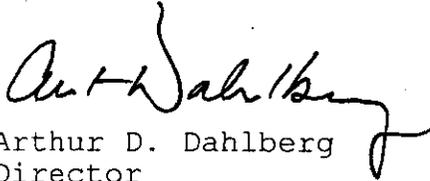
Dear Mr. Williams:

A reinspection of your property at 125 and 332 Wesmond Drive, by Inspector Pat Walker on **August 20, 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

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

I. POTOMAC EAST NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGY AREA PROPERTIES

622½ N. Alfred Street

Added to BI List:

Fall 2001

Current Status:

In-Compliance

Progress:

The owner has filed his applications for building permits and is making progress toward the rehabilitation of this property. Rehabilitation of this structure is anticipated to be complete in October 2002.

Projected Clearance:

October 2002

Items to Complete:

Complete repairs and obtain certificate of occupancy.

1733 Cameron Street

Added to BI List:

Fall 2001

Current Status:

In-Compliance

Progress:

The owner is pursuing contractor estimates for his property. If the repairs are within his means, then he will contract for the property's rehabilitation. Should the repairs be beyond his means, he will pursue the sale of the property.

Projected Clearance:

December 2002

Items to Complete:

Obtain estimates, complete repairs and obtain certificate of occupancy or arrange for sale of property.

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. However the former contractor did not complete the interior repairs. The owner is soliciting bids from contractors and hopes to have the rehabilitation completed by September 2002

Projected Clearance:

September 2002

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

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Projected Clearance: | Mike Landi. Mr. Landi is to complete rehabilitation of this property by June 2002. |
| Items to Complete: | June 2002 "As Is" Purchaser to complete rehabilitation this property by June 2002. |
| | |
| 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 March 2002. |
| Projected Clearance: | March 2002 |
| Items to Complete: | Owner to complete rehabilitation. |
| | |
| 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 March 2002. |
| Projected Clearance: | March 2002 |
| 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 March 2002. |
| Projected Clearance: | March 2002 |
| Items to Complete: | System finals and interior finishes. |

II. POTOMAC WEST NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGY AREA PROPERTIES

3821 Elbert Avenue

Added to BI List:

September 1999

Current Status:

In-Compliance

Progress:

The owner of this property has decided to rehabilitate the existing structure. The owner continues to pack and store her personal belongings in preparation for rehabilitation of the structure. The rehabilitation is anticipated to be completed by December 2002.

Projected Clearance:

December 2002

Items to Complete:

Complete packing and storage of personal belongings. Secure rehabilitation contractor and rehabilitate the structure.

2930 Hickory Street

Added to BI List:

September 2001

Current Status:

In-Compliance

Progress:

The owner of this property is seeking a Home Rehabilitation Loan Program loan. The loan is expected to be finalized in March 2002 and rehabilitation of the property is expected to begin in April 2002. The rehabilitation is anticipated to be completed by October 2002.

Projected Clearance:

October 2002

Items to Complete:

Complete Home Rehabilitation Loan Program processing, packing and storage of personal belongings, secure rehabilitation contractor and rehabilitate the structure.