

WS  
4-22-03

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
ALEXANDRIA VISITORS CENTER CONSULTANT STUDY**

**APRIL 22, 2003  
6:00 P.M.**

**CITY COUNCIL WORK ROOM**

**AGENDA**

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| I.   | Opening Remarks   | Philip Sunderland, City<br>Manager  |
| II.  | Presentation of the Results of the Alexandria<br>Alexandria Visitors Center Study | Alan Parter, Parter<br>International, Inc.<br><br>Bill Logue, Parter<br>International, Inc. |
| III. | City Council Discussion   |   |

*Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the City Council Work Session may call the City Clerk and Clerk of Council's Office at 838-4500 (TTY/TDD 838-5056). We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made.*

*Individuals who require translation services to participate in the City Council meeting may call the City Clerk and Clerk of Council's Office at 838-4500. We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made.*

# Alexandria Visitors Center Analysis

**The Parter International Team**

**Parter International, Inc.**

**Powe.Jones Architects**

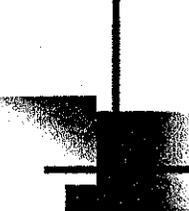
**EDAW**

**Gorove-Slade Associates**

**Gallagher & Associates**

**April 22, 2003**

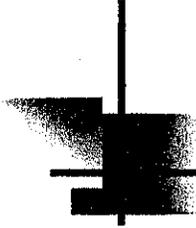
WJS  
4-22-03



# The Assignment

---

- The Assignment:
  - Whether New Visitors Center Warranted
  - If So, Where Should It Be Placed?



# Information Gathering

---

- Secondary Research
  - Local / National
- Primary Research
  - Interviews
  - Site Visits
  - Surveys
  - Focus Groups
  - Client Meetings

# Findings

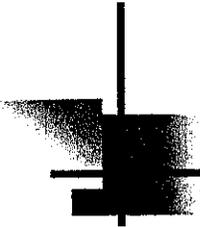
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Well-Defined Visitor Domain</li> <li>■ Access to Large Regional Market</li> <li>■ Condition of Public Environment</li> <li>■ Unique Product</li> <li>■ Alexandria is Attractive to the Cultural &amp; Heritage Tourist</li> <li>■ Tourist Satisfaction</li> <li>■ Increasing Realization of the Value Tourism Provides the City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Signage</li> <li>■ Parking</li> <li>■ Visitor and Tourism Data and Research With Respect to Day Trippers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New Visitors Center</li> <li>■ Increased Tourism Marketing</li> <li>■ Support for Tourism</li> <li>■ Maximize Riverfront Potential</li> <li>■ Partnerships</li> <li>■ Partnering with Washington, DC and Mt. Vernon</li> <li>■ Moving Tourists Beyond Old Town</li> <li>■ Nurture Relationship with Motor Coach Operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conflicts between tourism activities and neighborhoods</li> <li>■ Change</li> <li>■ Traffic Congestion</li> <li>■ Competition From Other Localities</li> <li>■ Terrorism</li> </ul>



# Tourism & Economics

---

- Strong drive market
- Alexandria tourist median income
- Repeat visitors
- Satisfaction rating
- The DC visitor
- Tourism economic impact
- Motor coach impact



# Proposed Visitors Center Mission

---

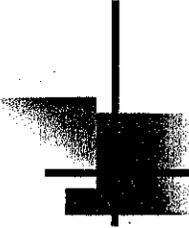
- Provide a welcoming, pleasing and fun experience designed to encourage visitors:
  - to participate in all aspects of Alexandria;
  - to visit the surrounding area of Old Town, its historic and other attractions, restaurants and shopping;
  - to visit other Alexandria area and attractions outside of primary visitor domain;
  - to stay longer in and return to Alexandria; and
  - to leave as satisfied visitors and goodwill ambassadors for Alexandria.



# Proposed Visitor Center Mission

---

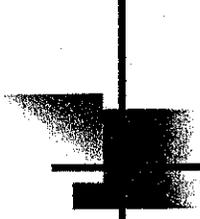
- Provide information, directions, basic visitor amenities, reservations and ticketing, and access to attractions, facilities, hotels, restaurants and entertainment.
- Act as a staging point for walking, trolley and garden tours to reduce idling time and travel time for buses in the area.
- Act as a node or pick-up/drop-off point to encourage the use of mass transit.
- Convince tourists that Alexandria cares and wants to help make their stay an interesting and pleasant one.



# Comparables

---

- Charleston, South Carolina
- Montgomery, Alabama
- Newport, Rhode Island
- Corning, New York
- Easton, Pennsylvania
- Types of Visitors Centers
  - Information centers
  - Information and orientation centers
  - Interpretive centers



# Ramsay House Analysis

---

- History
- Services Offered
- Visitation & Usage
- Transportation
- Traffic & Parking
- Assessment



# Site Criteria

---

- Relationship to tourist domain- King Street/center of Old Town
- Positive and negative impacts on residential and business neighbors
- Easy vehicular access, convenient to parking, public transportation/DASH/shuttle
- Convenience for motor coach tours
- Exterior spaces usable in fair weather for overflow and staging
- Visually accessible and identifiable for pedestrian and car traveler
- Connections and relationships to attractions, lodging, shopping & restaurants
- Public acceptance/acceptability
- Costs
- Operational issues

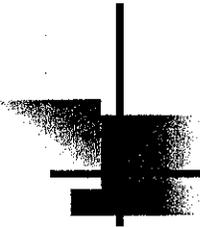
# Locations Considered



E.DAW

## POTENTIAL LOCATIONS CONSIDERED

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA  
VISITOR CENTER ANALYSIS



# Recommendations Common to All

---

## ■ Signage & Wayfinding

- Improvements will help manage traffic & parking, define districts & identity, reinforce the experience, create linkages

## ■ Public Transportation

- Encourage special bus passes; Extend DASH ABOUT to weekdays or free off-peak DASH
- King Street signal synchronization & larger pull-offs to clear lane of traffic



## Recommendations Common to All

---

### ■ Motor Coach Management

- Improve signage, establish designated routes
- Set aside more drop-off on Market Square, identify and mark additional parking and partnerships

### ■ Parking

- Develop parking census, review parking regulations & explore discount rate structures

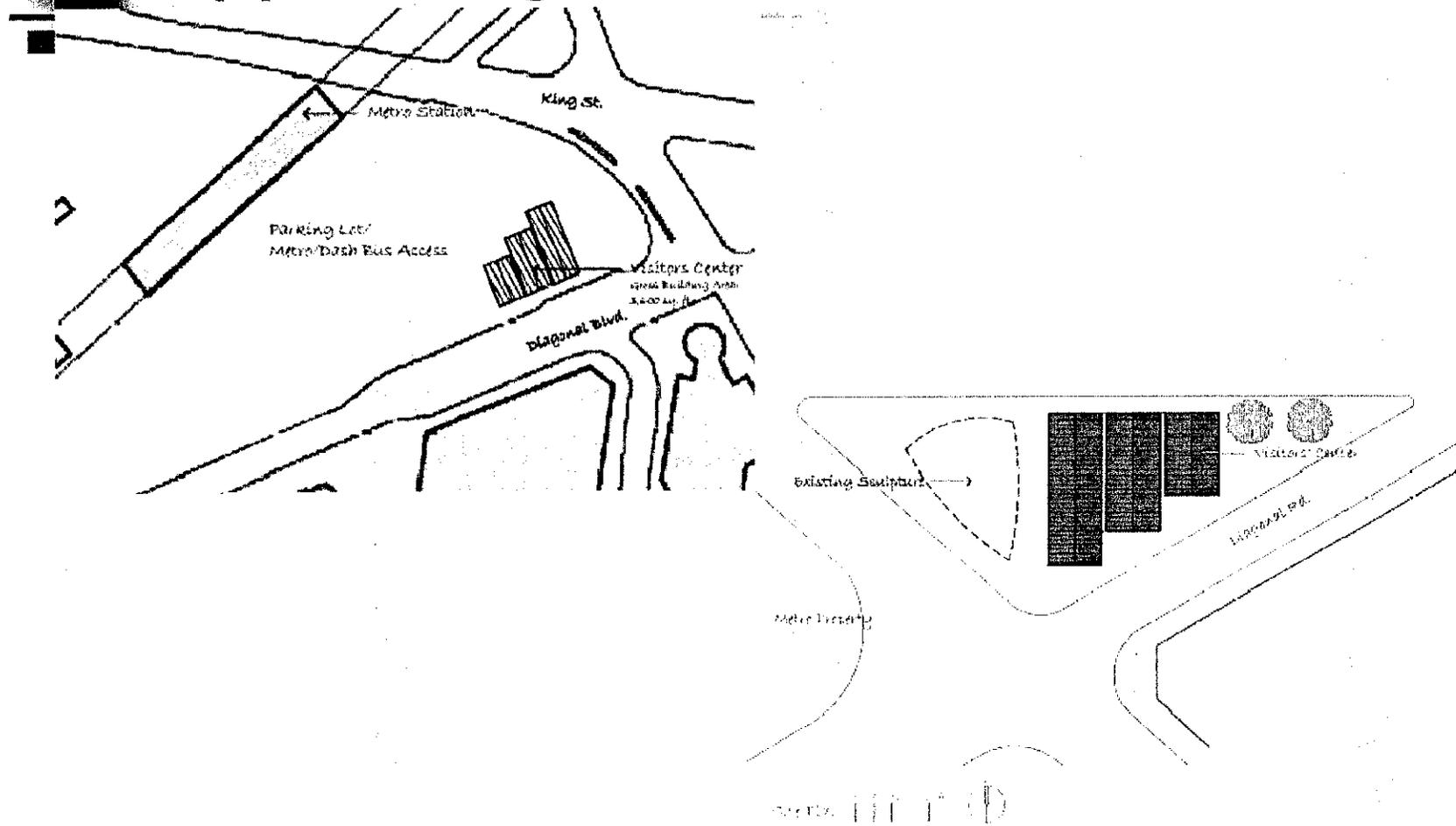


## Recommended Site Alternatives

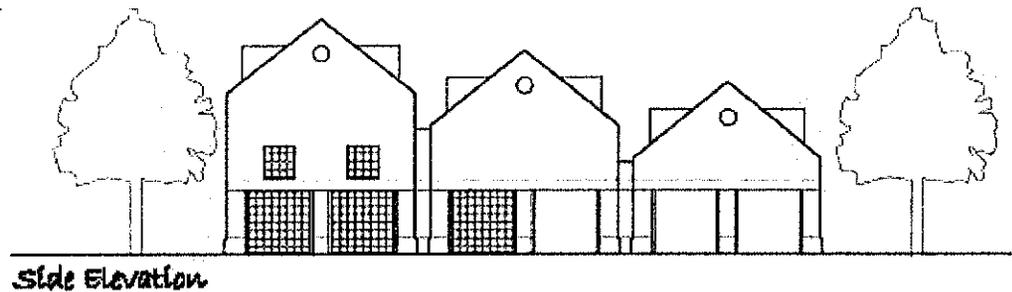
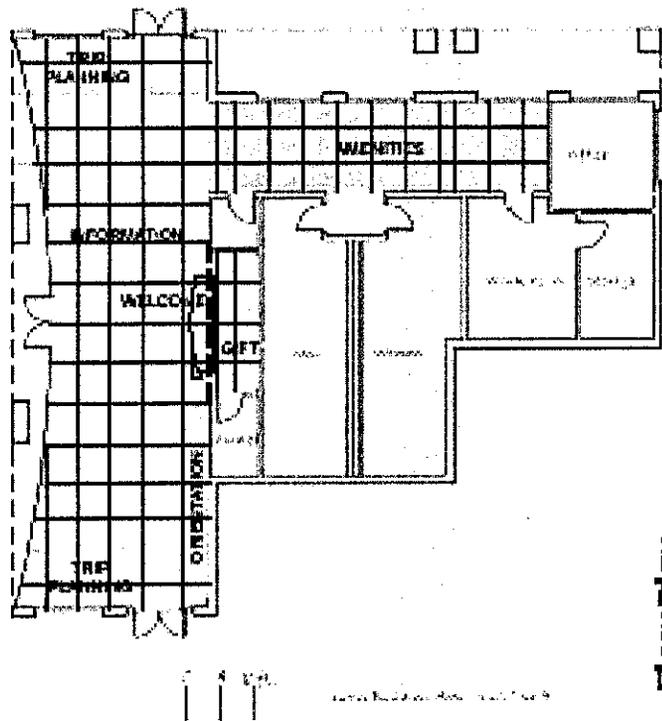
---

- King Street Metro Station Lot
- King Street Triangle
- King Street Metro Concourse
- Market Square
- Ramsay – Renovation & Expansion
- Ramsay – Status Quo/Renovate+Metro
- Ramsay – Status Quo – Marketing

# Upper King Street Site Alternatives

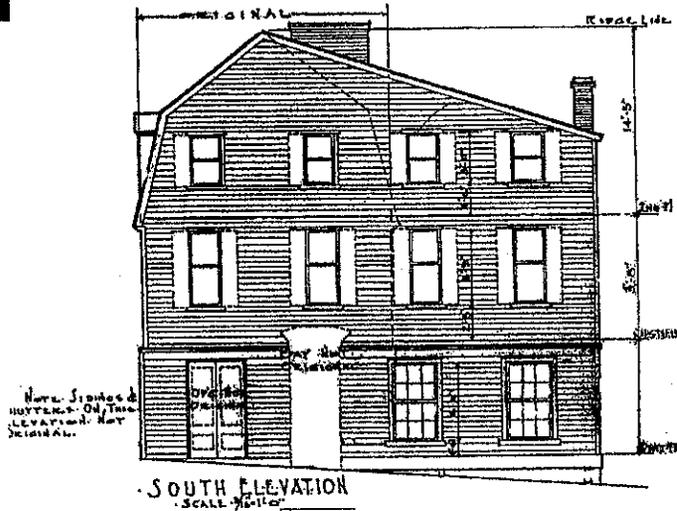


# Upper King Street Alternative

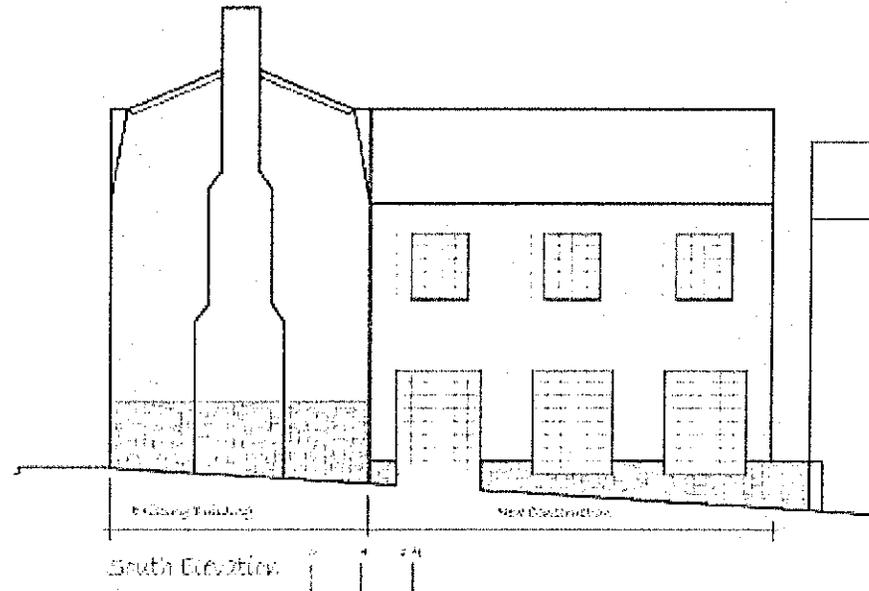


Floor Plan

# Ramsay House Expansion Alternative

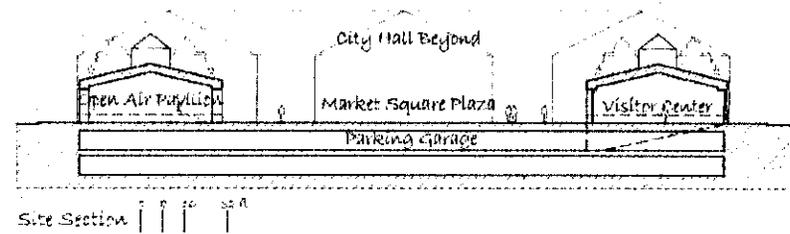
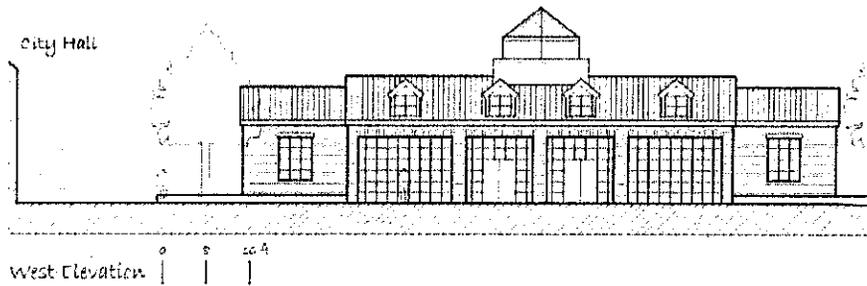
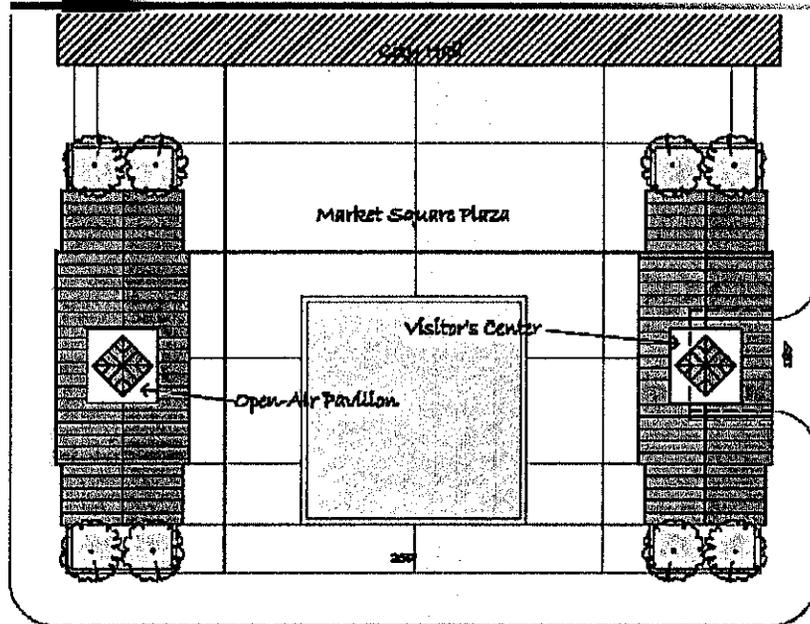


*Illustration No. 2—1936 Historic American Building Survey measured drawing of the Ramsay House. The drawing indicates the original configuration of the building. A.A. Biggs, delineator. WPA under the direction of the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Design. Source: Special Collections, Alexandria Library*

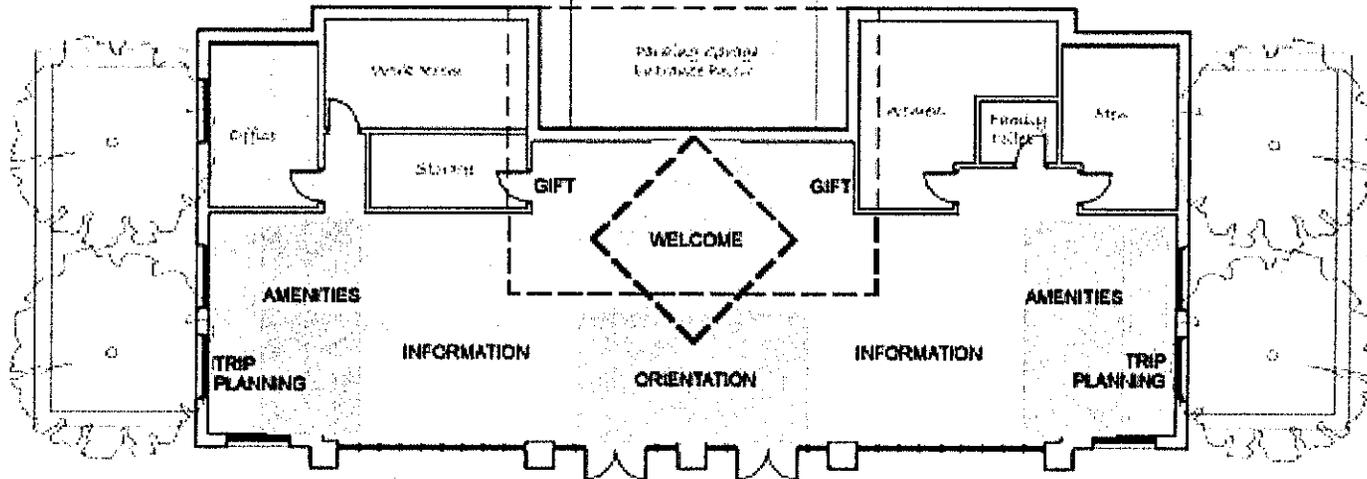




# Market Square Alternative



# Market Square Alternative



Gross Building Area: 18,600 sq ft



Site Issues/Properties	Ransay House- Existing	Ransay House- Expanded	Market Square Pavilion	Metro Station Concourse	Metro Station Lot	King St. Triangle
<b>SITE ISSUES</b>						
Availability	+	+	+	-	-	+
Site Acquisition	+	+	+	-	-	+
Proximity to Attractions	+	+	+	-	-	-
Visibility	+	+	+	-	o	o
Auto Accessibility	o	o	+	+	+	o
Metro Accessibility	-	-	-	+	+	+
Motorcoach Accessibility	o	o	+	+	+	o
Pedestrian Marshalling	o	o	+	o	+	+
Impact on Neighborhood	-	o	+	+	+	+
Size Fit w/ Program	-	-	+	+	+	+
Impact on Site	+	-	+	+	-	-
<b>VISITOR CENTER ISSUES</b>						
Site/Building Ownership	+	+	+	-	-	+
Visitor Experience	-	o	+	o	o	+
Visitor Convenience	+	+	+	-	-	-
Availability of Bus Queuing	o	o	+	o	+	o
Tour Marshalling Space	-	o	+	+	+	+
Impact on Neighborhood	+	+	+	o	o	o
First Cost	o	o	o	o	o	o
Operational Efficiency	-	-	+	+	+	+
ADA Accessibility	-	-	+	+	+	+