

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 21, 2003

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

FROM: EILEEN P. FOGARTY, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND ZONING *EPF*

SUBJECT: DSUP #2002-0048; MPA #2003-004; REZ #2002-005
QUAKER RIDGE, 3517-3551 DUKE ST.

At the November 15, 2003, City Council hearing, the City Council requested staff to provide a memorandum responding to the following issues:

- the geo-technical report and the retaining wall on the Quaker Village property (adding additional height on the existing wall and the possibility of a new retaining wall);
- existing and permitted number of units under the R-8 zoning;
- the number of existing trees to be removed or preserved, and the number of new trees to be installed on the site; and
- the validity of the protest petition that has been filed by the adjoining residents.

A. Geo-technical Report- Quaker Village Retaining Wall:

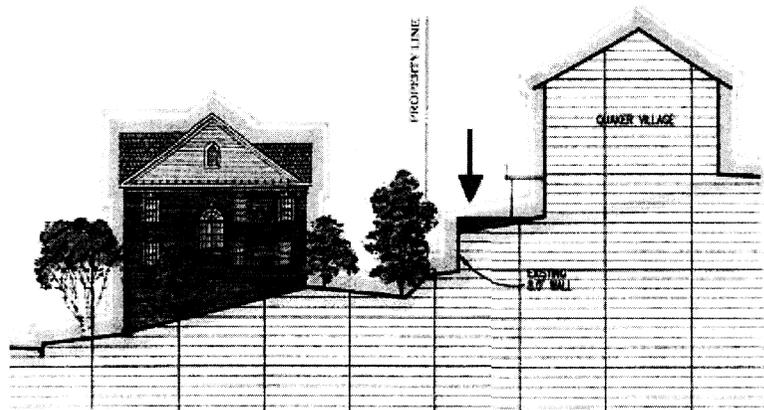
Concerns were expressed at the public hearing about the stability of the soil for construction and the potential impacts on the adjoining Quaker Village townhomes and retaining walls. To address this concern, the applicant submitted a revised letter dated October 9, 2003 from Geo-technical Consulting and Testing Inc., which describes the soil analysis that has been conducted, including soil test borings of various depths and soil laboratory testing. The preliminary study indicates that ground water was not encountered in any of the boring locations, and the engineers expressed the opinion that the "project site is generally suitable for the proposed residential construction of townhouses and associated site improvements." The letter indicates that proposed grading for the site will have an "adequate factor of safety against slope instability." The engineer indicates that "the proposed preliminary plan will not adversely impact the stability of these properties."

The adjoining Quaker Village residents have raised the possibility of providing a retaining wall on the northern property line of the Quaker Ridge development, or raising the height of the existing retaining wall on the Quaker Village property to provide increased screening for the proposed development. According to T&ES, a retaining wall is designed for a specific vertical and horizontal

loading capacity. In this case the City has no specific geo-technical testing data relating to the existing and/or proposed wall. However, it is generally problematic from a design standpoint to add height and fill. The applicant's engineer performed an analysis of the possibility of raising the height of the existing retaining wall. While there are areas of concern, based upon preliminary analysis by the developer, it appears that it may be possible to increase the height of the wall, with the feasibility of raising the height of the retaining wall requiring further engineering analysis and staff review prior to construction.

Providing a retaining wall on the northern property line would result in a very tall retaining wall and the elimination of the majority of the trees that are proposed in the tree preservation area. In addition, the wall raises significant engineering and structural concerns. Given the considerable height of the wall, resulting in the loss of the wooded buffer area, staff does not believe that providing a retaining wall on the northern property line is a desirable solution.

The second suggestion was the possibility of raising the height of the existing retaining wall on Quaker Village to provide level rear yards and additional screening for the Quaker Village townhouses as generally depicted below.

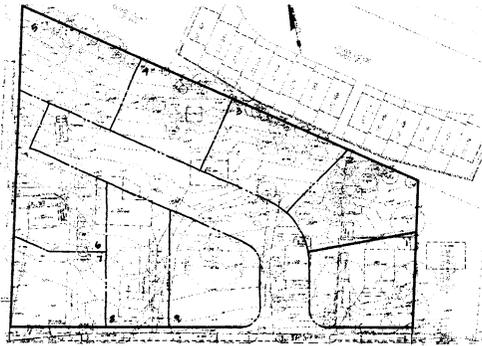


B. Existing, Allowable and Proposed Density:

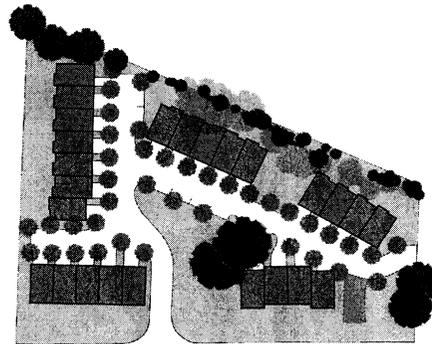
In response to questions raised about the existing, permitted and proposed density of the site and adjacent sites, the table below provides a comparison of the existing densities of the neighboring townhouse developments and, as to the Quaker Ridge site, the density allowed under the current R-8 zoning, the density requested by the applicant, and the proposed density recommended by staff and the Planning Commission.

	<i>Colonial Heights</i>	<i>Quaker Village</i>	<i>Quaker Ridge</i>		
			<u>Existing R-8 Zoning</u>		
<i>Site Area</i>	4.44 Acres	4.93 Acres	2.49 Acres		
<i>Number of Units</i>	44	55	9	28	25
<i>Density</i>	9.90 Units/Acre	11.15 Units/Acre	5.22 Units/Acre	11.24 Units/Acre	10.04 Units/Acre

Current R-8 Zoning (9 Units)



Current Site Plan (25 Units)



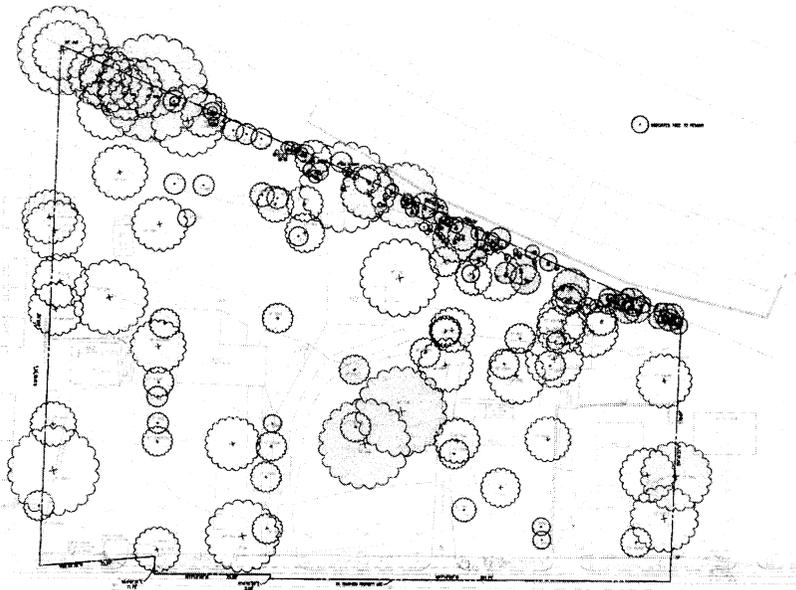
Based upon the minimum lot area requirements within the R-8/Single family zone, a maximum of 9 single family homes could be constructed on the subject property. One additional home could be constructed on the adjoining parcel located to the east of the applicant's assemblage under the R-8 zoning.

The Planning Commission and staff recommended a reduction in the number of units from 28 to 25, which reduces the overall density of the site from 11.24 units per acre to 10.04 units per acre. As a comparison, the density of Colonial Heights is 9.9 units per acre (44 units on 4.44 acres) and Quaker Village is 11.15 units per acre (55 units on 4.93 acres).

C. Number of Trees to be Preserved, Removed or Installed:

The applicant proposes to retain 83 trees in the buffer area along the northern portion of the site adjacent to Quaker Village. As depicted on the preliminary site plan, a total of 68 trees are proposed to be removed. The applicant proposes to plant 113 new trees of varying species and heights that range from 6'- 12'.

Existing Trees To Be Removed and Retained

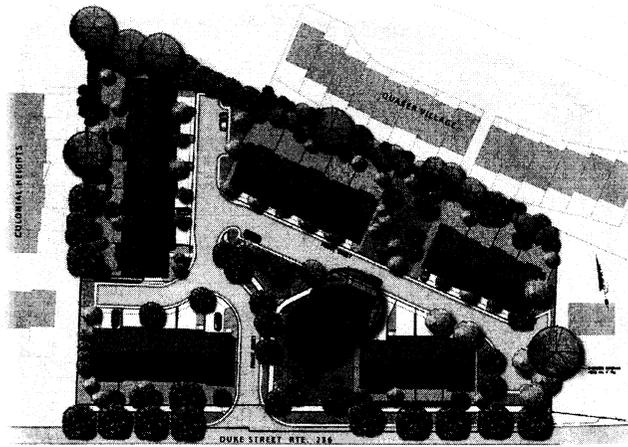


D. Protest of Zoning Map Amendment By Landowners:

Section 11-808 of the Zoning Ordinance permits a protest of zoning map amendments by adjoining landowners. The protest requires a minimum of 20% of all land within 300 feet of the boundaries of the land to be changed by the map amendment to be part of the petition. The petition that has been submitted by the adjoining residents meets this minimum requirement and is valid; therefore, the approval of the map amendment will require six affirmative votes (a super-majority) by City Council to approve the rezoning. The Master Plan amendment and development special use permit may be approved by a simple majority vote.

E. Parking:

One of the issues that has been raised is the possibility of locating the units adjacent to Quaker Village approximately 10 ft. farther from Quaker Village by reducing the length of the driveways for these units as depicted below.



Locating the units approximately 10 ft. farther away from Quaker Village will enable an increased physical separation, and a larger buffer on the northern portion of the site adjacent to Quaker Village. Reducing the depth of the driveways for the 9 units adjacent to Quaker Village would result in the elimination of 18 visitor parking spaces in the driveways. The resulting number of visitor parking spaces would be 8 spaces that are shared and 24 spaces within the driveways for a total of 32 visitor parking spaces.

The proposed development has a significantly higher parking ratio than the two existing townhouse developments as depicted in the table below. The proposed development provides 8 visitor parking spaces and 48 spaces in the driveways for a parking ratio of 4 sp/unit, significantly more than the 2 sp/unit required by the Zoning Ordinance. The amount and location of visitor parking are sufficient for the proposed development and exceed both of the adjoining townhouse developments. The provision of additional parking spaces would reduce the amount of open space and landscaping, which staff does not support.

	<u>Colonial Heights</u>	<u>Quaker Village</u>	<u>Quaker Ridge</u> <i>(Proposed)</i>
<u>Required Parking</u>	<u>44 spaces (1 space per unit)</u>	<u>55 spaces (1 space per unit)+10% visitor parking (6 spaces)</u> <u>61 spaces</u>	<u>56 spaces (2 spaces per unit) + 15% visitor parking (8 spaces)</u> <u>64 spaces</u>
<u>Provided Parking</u>	<u>69 spaces (19 garages +50 bays) 1.57 spaces/unit + 19 spaces in 10' x 20' driveways</u> <u>88 spaces</u>	<u>110 spaces (2 per unit) + 19 visitor spaces</u> <u>129 total spaces</u>	<u>56 spaces + 48 spaces in driveways +8 visitor spaces</u> <u>112 spaces</u>
<u>Parking Ratio</u> <i>(with visitor parking)</i>	<u>2.0 sp/unit</u>	<u>2.3 sp/unit</u>	<u>4.0 sp/unit</u> <u>3.28 sp/unit **</u>

** Parking ratio with the elimination of 18 spaces for the driveways for lots 13-23 and based upon 25 units.

In order to increase the physical distance of the proposed townhomes from Quaker Village, staff supports shifting the row of units located adjacent to Quaker Village farther to the south, which will eliminate several parking spaces in front of the units, but will provide a greater separation and increase the buffer area. The development provides more parking spaces than required by the zoning ordinance and than exist at either Colonial Heights or Quaker Village. The provision of additional parking spaces is not needed because of the current amount of resident and visitor parking and would decrease the amount of open space and landscaping.

cc: Arthur Dahlberg, Director, Code Enforcement
Rich Baier, Director, Transportation & Environmental Services