

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2012

TO: CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
OHAD BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

FROM: AL COX, FAIA, HISTORIC PRESERVATION MANAGER

SUBJECT: SHORT TERM SAFETY FENCE AT THE WINDMILL HILL PARK BULKHEAD
500A & 501 SOUTH UNION STREET, BAR CASE #2012-0187

At the June 20, 2012 hearing, the Board deferred the application and directed Staff to work with the community to devise an appropriate design which minimized public risk at the decayed bulkhead.

ANALYSIS

Following public comment and BAR recommendations, staff developed five design options for additional community review that met the City's safety criteria. The public was notified of these via eNews and had the opportunity to review and register a preferred design option for the safety fence on the City's web site from August 9 - 22 and in a Community Open House held on August 15, 2012.

In total, 59 votes were received (56 electronic and 3 handwritten). The overwhelming majority of the respondents, 46%, preferred the Nautical Post & Rope (Option #3), while approximately 22% preferred the Ornamental Aluminum (Option #2) and 20% preferred the Split Rail (Option #4). The remaining 12% of the votes were for options #1 and #5.

Staff has no objection to any of the proposed designs for this short term safety fence and supports the Nautical Post and Rope design option favored by the survey respondents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, SEPTEMBER 5, 2012

Staff recommends approval of the Nautical Post and Rope, Option #3.

ATTACHMENTS

1 – Updated Supporting Materials

2 – June 20, 2012 Staff Report for BAR2012-0187, with minutes and original application materials



EXAMPLE OF FENCE IN PLACE IN BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK, BROOKLYN, NY



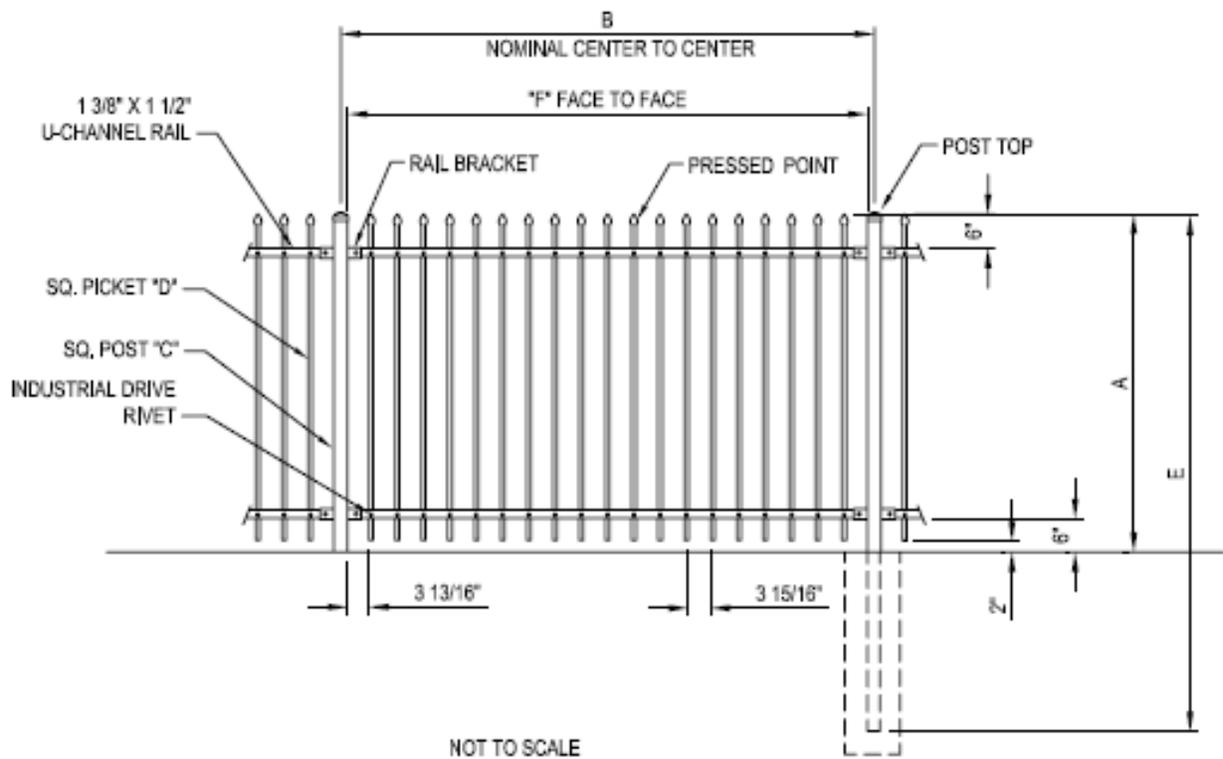
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT AT WINDMILL HILL PARK

Option #1: Post and Wire
Estimated Cost: \$16,000



Option #2: Ornamental Aluminum

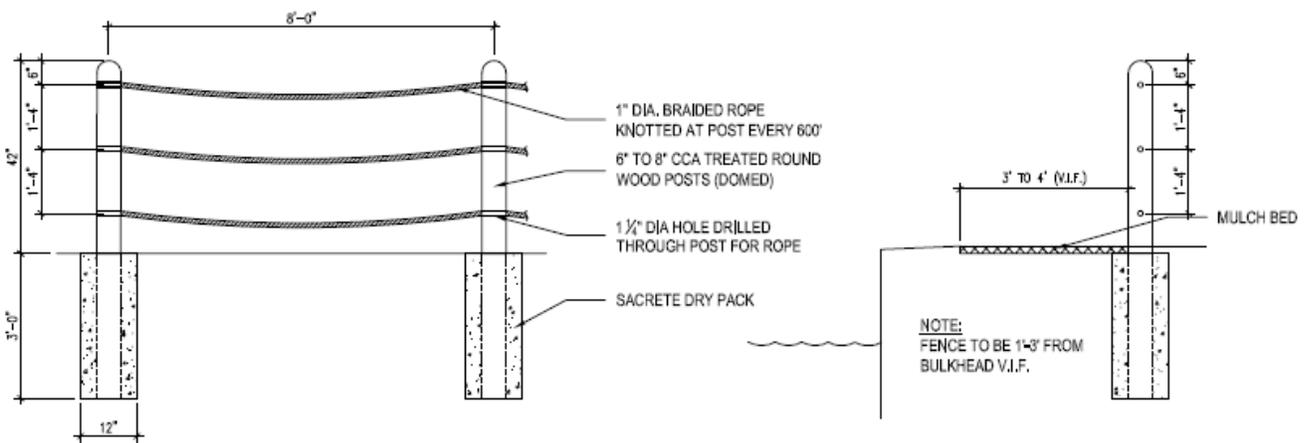
Estimated Cost: \$34,000





Option #3: Nautical Post and Rope

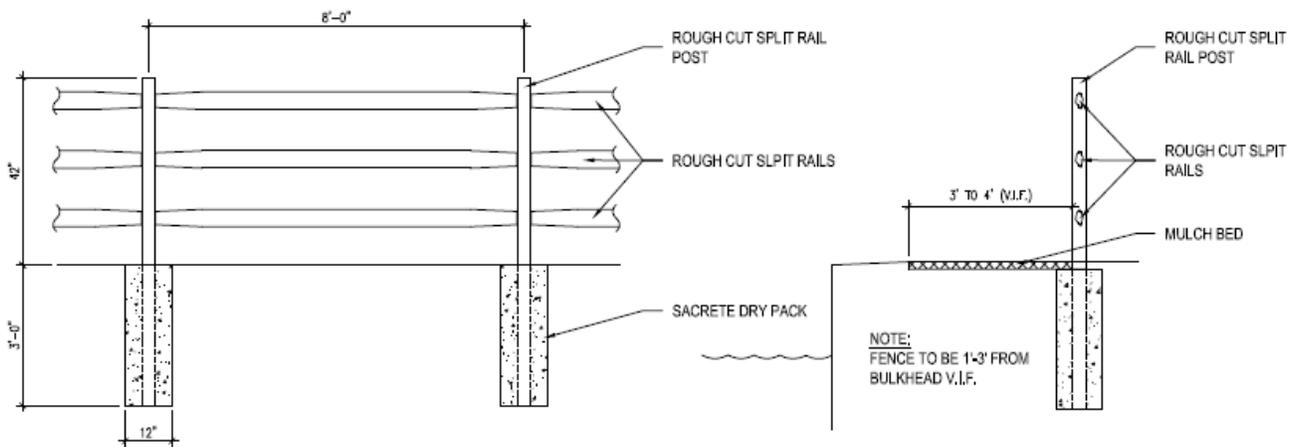
Estimated Cost: \$32,000



A BULKHEAD FENCE DETAIL
SCALE: NONE



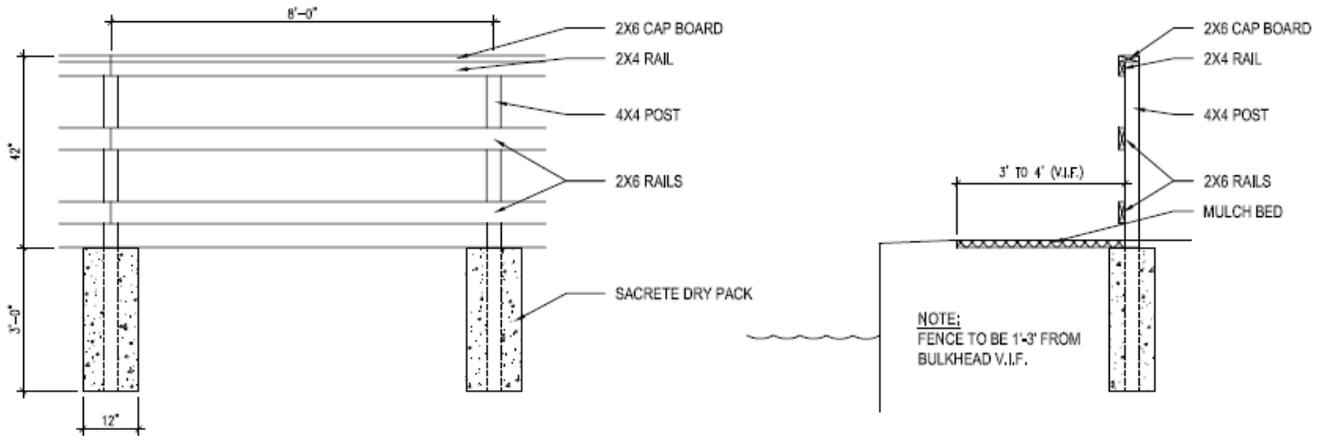
Option #4: Three Rail, Split Rail
 Estimated cost: \$8,400



A BULKHEAD FENCE DETAIL
 SCALE: NONE



Option #5: Kentucky Board Rail
 Estimated cost: \$15,800



A BULKHEAD FENCE DETAIL
 SCALE: NONE

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE # 2012-0187

BAR Meeting
June 20, 2012

ISSUE: Request for alterations (fence)
APPLICANT: City of Alexandria
LOCATION: 500A and 501 South Union Street
ZONE: WPR / Waterfront park and recreation zone

BOARD ACTION JUNE 20, 2012: Deferral, 5-0.

This item was removed from the Consent Calendar.

SPEAKERS

Jack Browand, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities, spoke in support of the application and outlined the scope of the project. He stated that the fence was needed to ensure public safety and restrict access to the failing bulkhead. It was noted that the fence was temporary until the bulkhead can be adequately repaired as part of future Windmill Hill Park improvements.

Emily Baker, City Engineer, Transportation & Environmental Services, spoke in support of the application and noted that it is not the City's long-term intention to implement permanent fencing in this location. She also clarified that the proposed fence would not be utilized in the future for a construction safety fence.

Murney Keleher, property owner at 208 North Royal Street, spoke against the proposed fence design and requested that this issue be further studied.

Linda Couture, property owner at 505 Duke Street, spoke against the proposed fence design and requested that this issue be further studied.

Van Van Fleet, property owner at 26 Wolfe Street, spoke against the proposed fence design and noted that it would not be temporary once installed.

Mark Mueller, property owner at 414 South Royal Street, spoke against the proposed fence design and requested that this issue be further studied.

Graeme Bannerman, property owner at 3 Wilkes Street, spoke against the proposed fence design and requested that this issue be further studied, noting that neighbors typically cleaned up the bulkhead area

on a regular basis.

John Hynan, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, agreed with the comments already made speaking against the proposed fence design and requested that this issue be further studied.

Poul Hertel spoke against the proposed fence design and asked that this issue be further studied. He recommended that City Staff and the Board look for appropriate examples in other historic districts in maritime/nautical areas. He provided examples of possible designs to the Board.

Yvonne Waight, representing Old Town Civic Association, requested a deferral to study alternatives, finding the proposed fence to be inappropriate. She expressed concern about constructing barriers to the waterfront that block access.

Bert Ely, property owner at 200 South Pitt Street and director of the Old Town Civic Association Waterfront Work Group, requested a deferral for further study.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Neale expressed concern about lack of access to the waterfront, though acknowledged that some access areas were clearly not safe. He asked whether some areas could be left open and others fenced. He understood the intention of a minimalist design but thought that at night it could potentially be harmful and suggested adding a top rail or reflective element. He asked whether bollards could be used for the temporary fence and then reused later. He suggested a deferral stating that he was not satisfied with the current design.

Mr. Keleher stated that he agreed with the comments made by the community. He questioned whether the fence was necessary and also supported a deferral for an improved design.

Mr. von Senden noted that when an engineer or risk manager advises that something must be replaced or secured, that it should be done. He accepted that a fence must be located here. He advised calling it “short-term” fencing rather than “temporary.” He asked whether a guardrail would be required when the bulkhead is replaced and how the bulkhead would be maintained/cleaned? He noted that the minimalist design was not popular but that it looked better in person. He suggested a fence that could also be used permanently. He also suggested a more nautical design, such as the use of sailing life lines and turnbuckles.

Mr. Carlin thought the proposal could be successfully resolved and requested a deferral. He suggested parameters for Staff to address: 1) Maintenance issues and 2) Cost, since it is a short-term fence.

Dr. Fitzgerald noted that the BAR was not the Board of Safety and found an invisible temporary fence to be acceptable. He stated that as a taxpayer he did not want an expensive fence. He also requested that the City restudy the risk associated with the existing bulkhead.

On a motion by Mr. Carlin, seconded by Mr. Neale, the Board voted to defer the application for further study and for Staff and the community to work together on an appropriate scheme. The motion passed, 5-0.

REASON

The Board was concerned about the design the fence. The Board requested that the applicant work with the community to devise an appropriate design which minimized public risk.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION JUNE 20, 2012: Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

****BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.



CASE BAR2012-0187



I. ISSUE:

The applicant, the City of Alexandria, is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a new safety fence along the bulkhead at Windmill Hill Park in the southeast quadrant of the City. The existing bulkhead is in disrepair and therefore hazardous to the public. The proposed safety fence is temporary (approximately five years) until the bulkhead can be adequately repaired in the future as part of waterfront park improvements. The four foot tall treated wood fence posts will be 6 or 8 inches in diameter and installed at 10' on center. Horizontal 12½ gage high tensile wire will be twisted on itself and crimped, attaching to the wood posts. The fence will be located approximately 1-3 feet behind the concrete bulkhead to accommodate existing trees and this area will be filled with mulch.



Figure 1: Mock-up of the proposed fence.

II. HISTORY:

Windmill Hill derives its name from a wind-powered mill constructed on the steep banks overlooking the Potomac River in this location in the 1840s. The area comprising Windmill Hill Park was an important Civil War logistics and railroad center, linking with the existing Wilkes Street Tunnel. The land where the dog park and Ford’s Landing townhouse development now sit was used in the 19th century as a shipbuilding site known as Keith’s Wharf and later as a Ford automobile dealer make-ready facility. Today, the park occupies land on both the east and west sides of South Union Street and features a basketball court, volleyball courts, a playground, a dog park and open lawn.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

At the request of the City, an engineering consultant (RK&K) inspected the bulkhead around the former Old Town Yacht Basin in February 2012 and provided an assessment report in March 2012. Findings indicated that the concrete bulkhead remains are in “critical” condition. Recommendations stated that the bulkhead should be removed and replaced in the near future. In the meantime, a fence should be placed around the perimeter of the structure for public safety.

The BAR’s *Design Guidelines* state that “fences, garden walls and gates should be appropriate in materials, design and scale to the period and character of the structure they surround.” As fences were not typically installed around bulkheads in the 18th and 19th centuries, Staff could find no historically appropriate design precedents. Staff, therefore, proposes a fence with heavy steel wire which is visually unobtrusive and will not obscure views of the water for residents or users of the park. The wire is supported by treated wood posts which reference the pilings used at marinas, and which existed in this Yacht Basin until recently.

The City is proposing a fence option that is minimally visible and will ensure safety along the bulkhead. The temporary safety fence will remain in place until FY 2016/2017 when funding is available through the CIP for bulkhead improvements. In the interim, Staff has presented project options to the community from the approved 2003 Windmill Hill Park master plan that can be implemented immediately with existing funding. Park projects implemented will be located in areas of the park not affected by future bulkhead construction activities.

STAFF:

Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Administration

C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-2 Fences less than 6’ in height do not require a building permit.

Transportation & Environmental Services

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)

FINDINGS

F1. These parcels are located in both a Resource Protection Area and the Flood Plain 2011. However, the proposed work will not cause any ground disturbance or obstruction to water flow. It is understood that this is for temporary protection, prior to installation of any permanent fencing or protection methods, T&ES shall be included in the review for the effect of the final

design. (T&ES)

CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS

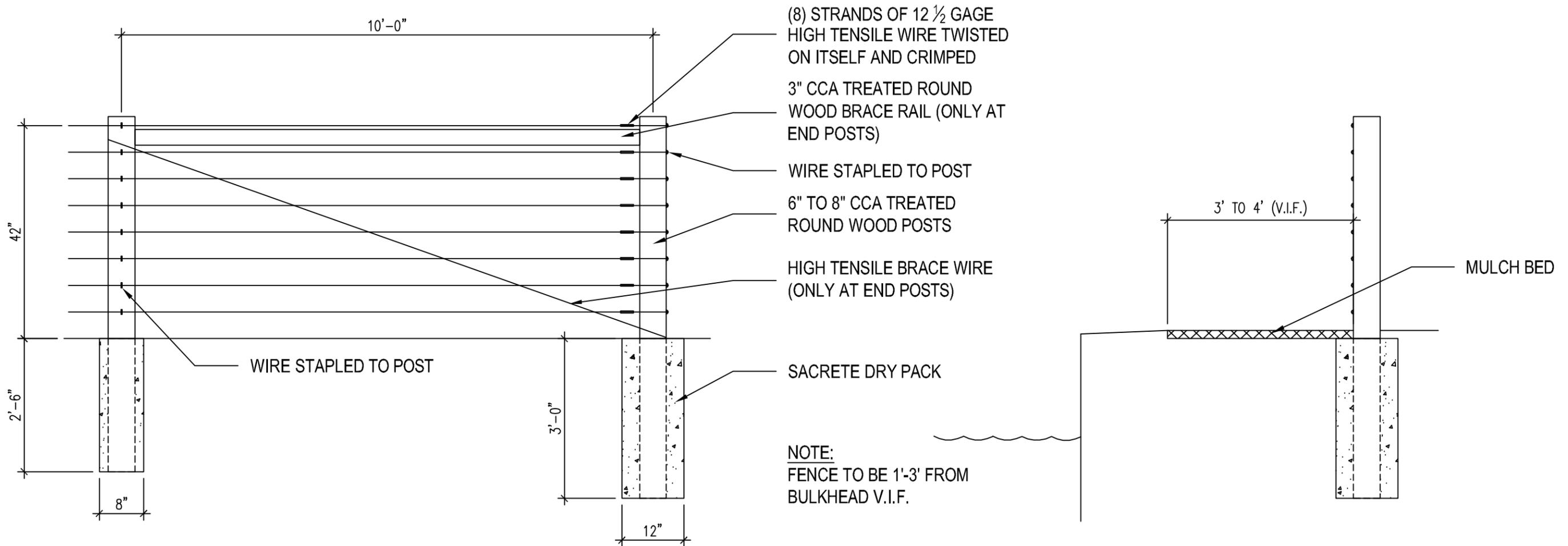
- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C3. Any work within or performed from the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)

V. ATTACHMENTS

1 – Supporting Materials

2 – Letter to the BAR

3 – Application for BAR2012-00187 at 500A and 501 South Union Street



A

BULKHEAD FENCE DETAIL

SCALE: NONE



Harborside

Union St

Gibbon St

Windmill Hill Dog Exercise Area

Ford's Landing

Windmill Hill
June 2012

— — — Location of Proposed Safety Fence

↑
N
1 inch = 75 feet

To the Board of Architectural Review:

Because we are not able to attend your hearing on the fence proposed for the bulkhead at Windmill Hill Park, we are writing to submit our comments in opposition to that fence.

The Notice of Public Hearing states that the issue is “the installation of a temporary safety fence around the bulkhead.” That statement reveals the problem: the proposed crude fence would look like a “temporary” fence, but in fact it would stand as a more-than-block-long eyesore for five years and likely longer. We ask you to turn it down.

A temporary fence might be appropriate if it would last only a short time. Instead, the proposed fence would violate the community’s view and your standards until replacement of the bulkhead, which the City estimates will occur in 2017 “at the earliest.” Given a pattern of delay in this project since City Council approval ten years ago, the lack of City Council funding approval, the project’s significant cost (estimated at \$4.9 million in 2008), and the loss of contemplated U.S Army Corps of Engineers funding, it seems likely that the old bulkhead and its fence will be with us for an indefinite period beyond 2017.

Under the BAR’s standards, to be approved a fence should protect and reinforce the existing character of the historic district and manifest quality design compatible with the historic fabric, the park, the river view, and the nearby architectural environment. The crude fence proposed by the City cannot be intended to satisfy those criteria. Would the BAR approve that fence if a private party proposed to erect it for five years or more?

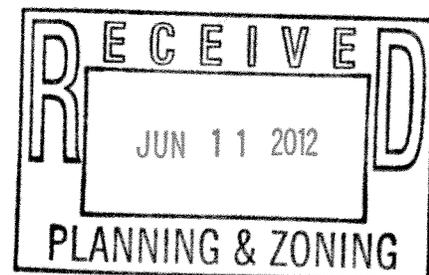
We respectfully request that you insist upon an attractive and compatible fence that will be acceptable for years to come.

We note that the City also plans an “ornamental fence” (and possibly landscaping) along the Union Street side of the nearby dog exercise area. Perhaps that same ornamental fence/landscaping would be appropriate for the bulkhead.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael and Megan Adams

712 South Union Street



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|------------------|
| BAR Case # _____ |
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ADDRESS OF PROJECT: _____

TAX MAP AND PARCEL: _____ ZONING: _____

APPLICATION FOR: *(Please check all that apply)*

- CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
- PERMIT TO MOVE, REMOVE, ENCAPSULATE OR DEMOLISH
(Required if more than 25 square feet of a structure is to be demolished/impacted)
- WAIVER OF VISION CLEARANCE REQUIREMENT and/or YARD REQUIREMENTS IN A VISION CLEARANCE AREA (Section 7-802, Alexandria 1992 Zoning Ordinance)
- WAIVER OF ROOFTOP HVAC SCREENING REQUIREMENT
(Section 6-403(B)(3), Alexandria 1992 Zoning Ordinance)

Applicant: Property Owner Business *(Please provide business name & contact person)*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail : _____

Authorized Agent *(if applicable)*: Attorney Architect _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Legal Property Owner:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

- Yes** **No** Is there an historic preservation easement on this property?
- Yes** **No** If yes, has the easement holder agreed to the proposed alterations?
- Yes** **No** Is there a homeowner's association for this property?
- Yes** **No** If yes, has the homeowner's association approved the proposed alterations?

If you answered yes to any of the above, please attach a copy of the letter approving the project.

Additions & New Construction: Drawings must be to scale and should not exceed 11" x 17" unless approved by staff. All plans must be folded and collated into 12 complete 8 1/2" x 11" sets. Additional copies may be requested by staff for large-scale development projects or projects fronting Washington Street. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- N/A
- Scaled survey plat showing dimensions of lot and location of existing building and other structures on the lot, location of proposed structure or addition, dimensions of existing structure(s), proposed addition or new construction, and all exterior, ground and roof mounted equipment.
 - FAR & Open Space calculation form.
 - Clear and labeled photographs of the site, surrounding properties and existing structures, if applicable.
 - Existing elevations must be scaled and include dimensions.
 - Proposed elevations must be scaled and include dimensions. Include the relationship to adjacent structures in plan and elevations.
 - Materials and colors to be used must be specified and delineated on the drawings. Actual samples may be provided or required.
 - Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
 - For development site plan projects, a model showing mass relationships to adjacent properties and structures.

Signs & Awnings: One sign per building under one square foot does not require BAR approval unless illuminated. All other signs including window signs require BAR approval. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- N/A
- Linear feet of building: Front: _____ Secondary front (if corner lot): _____.
 - Square feet of existing signs to remain: _____.
 - Photograph of building showing existing conditions.
 - Dimensioned drawings of proposed sign identifying materials, color, lettering style and text.
 - Location of sign (show exact location on building including the height above sidewalk).
 - Means of attachment (drawing or manufacturer's cut sheet of bracket if applicable).
 - Description of lighting (if applicable). Include manufacturer's cut sheet for any new lighting fixtures and information detailing how it will be attached to the building's facade.

Alterations: Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- N/A
- Clear and labeled photographs of the site, especially the area being impacted by the alterations, all sides of the building and any pertinent details.
 - Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
 - Drawings accurately representing the changes to the proposed structure, including materials and overall dimensions. Drawings must be to scale.
 - An official survey plat showing the proposed locations of HVAC units, fences, and sheds.
 - Historic elevations or photographs should accompany any request to return a structure to an earlier appearance.

ALL APPLICATIONS: *Please read and check that you have read and understand the following items:*

- I have submitted a filing fee with this application. (Checks should be made payable to the City of Alexandria. Please contact staff for assistance in determining the appropriate fee.)
- I understand the notice requirements and will return a copy of the three respective notice forms to BAR staff at least five days prior to the hearing. If I am unsure to whom I should send notice I will contact Planning and Zoning staff for assistance in identifying adjacent parcels.
- I, the applicant, or an authorized representative will be present at the public hearing.
- I understand that any revisions to this initial application submission (including applications deferred for restudy) must be accompanied by the BAR Supplemental form and 12 sets of revised materials.

The undersigned hereby attests that all of the information herein provided including the site plan, building elevations, prospective drawings of the project, and written descriptive information are true, correct and accurate. The undersigned further understands that, should such information be found incorrect, any action taken by the Board based on such information may be invalidated. The undersigned also hereby grants the City of Alexandria permission to post placard notice as required by Article XI, Division A, Section 11-301(B) of the 1992 Alexandria City Zoning Ordinance, on the property which is the subject of this application. The undersigned also hereby authorizes the City staff and members of the BAR to inspect this site as necessary in the course of research and evaluating the application. The applicant, if other than the property owner, also attests that he/she has obtained permission from the property owner to make this application.

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____