

Docket Item # 2
BAR CASE # 2011-0011

BAR Meeting
April 27, 2011

ISSUE: Request for new construction of 21 townhouse units (17 single-family and 4 triplexes), 3 multi-family buildings and park, and waiver of rooftop screening requirement for Phase IV of the James Bland Redevelopment Project

APPLICANT: Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority by Kenneth Wire (McGuire Woods)

LOCATION: 898 North Alfred Street

ZONE: Zoned CDD #16

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the three multi-family buildings and park, and waiver of rooftop screening requirement, for Phase IV with the following conditions:

General

1. That the Board waive the screening requirements for the rooftop HVAC units and instead require the applicant to work with Staff, in the field, to locate the units so that they are not visible or are placed in the most subtle location feasible (previous BAR condition).
2. That the applicant use appropriate building materials, such as wood, composite, or synthetic materials which are high-quality, paintable, millable and solid throughout, for items such as door surrounds, front doors, railings and the like. Front doors shall be solid wood (Development-wide townhouse condition), or may be fiberglass or metal clad (for multi-family).
3. That the applicant propose windows that are in conformance with the *Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications* and that the applicant provide full specifications for all windows and doors prior to the building permit process.
4. That the applicant provide specifications for materials such as light fixtures, entry and service doors and any other materials as necessary during the building permit review process.
5. That the applicant work with Staff on the text and graphics of the historical marker and conform to the standards set forth in the City's recently adopted Wayfinding Program.
6. That the applicant work with Staff to determine the least obtrusive location for the mail boxes.
7. That the applicant adequately screen all utilities and trash receptacles from the street (public or private). Where illumination is required for utility and trash areas, the light fixtures should be discreet and unobtrusive, with final approval by Staff.

Multi-Family

8. That the applicant work with BAR and Development Staff to determine an appropriate courtyard planter scheme for permanent, appropriately-scaled planters that do not obscure architectural details or clutter the courtyard space.

Park

9. That the applicant remove the proposed semi-circular fence adjacent to the play area.

PREVIOUS STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS AND BOARD ACTIONS

BOARD ACTION, March 23, 2011: Portion approved as amended and portion deferred for further study, 5-0

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Townhouse

10. That the location of the solar collectors on the individual townhouses be approved by BAR Staff prior to their installation to insure that they are either not visible or are minimally visible (previous BAR condition);
11. That all of the loft levels be painted the same color, either a light grey or light taupe, instead of the variety of subtle colors proposed by the applicant and that any exposed metal channels be painted or otherwise made non-reflective (previous BAR condition, with modification);
12. That the garage door trim may be painted the same color as the rear elevation of the townhouse where they are located or painted white to match the trim;
13. That all visible roof materials (including porch roofs) be standing seam metal, metal shingles, slate or synthetic slate. (Development-wide condition);
14. That the applicant continue to work with Staff to refine the door, window and trim treatments so that they are stylistically compatible and do not have a mix of styles on a single townhouse. (Development-wide condition);
15. That the applicant work with Staff to leave some of the painted brick units (Lots 13/14/15) unpainted and propose new and different light fixtures.
16. That all of the units adjacent to the park should front onto the park and if that was not possible, that the applicant return to the Board for further study and review.
17. That the applicant add windows to the side elevation of the loft level where possible.
18. That the window hoods at the first floor of Lots 18 and 21 on Madison Street and Lot 7 on Montgomery Street be removed.
19. That the townhouse units on Lots 5-6 on the private street be a pair of twins.
20. That the applicant restudy the fenestration of the brick townhouse on Lots 3-4 on the private street and consider adding a paired window at the third story.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUED STUDY

General

10. That the Board waive the screening requirements for the rooftop HVAC units and instead require the applicant to work with Staff, in the field, to locate the units so that they are

- not visible or are placed in the most subtle location feasible (previous BAR condition);
11. That the applicant use appropriate building materials, such as wood, composite, or synthetic materials which are high-quality, paintable, millable and solid throughout, for items such as door surrounds, front doors, railings and the like. Front doors shall be solid wood (Development-wide condition);
 12. That the applicant propose windows that are in conformance with the *Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications*;
 13. That the applicant work with Staff on the text and graphics of the historic marker and conform to the standards set forth in the City's recently adopted Wayfinding Program.
 14. That the applicant work with Staff to determine the least obtrusive location for the mail boxes.
 15. That the applicant adequately screen all utilities and trash receptacles from the street (public or private).

Multi-Family

16. That the applicant provide a materials board and samples for the multi-family buildings and that the applicant propose a different material for the sills and headers than split-face block.
17. That the applicant simplify and coordinate the individual color palette for the multi-family buildings.
18. That the applicant provide the courtyard elevation for the center building.
19. That the applicant refine the spandrel element on the center building and work to lighten this element.
20. That the applicant consider stucco in place of the HardiePanel.

SPEAKERS

Greg Shron, representing EYA and ARHA, spoke in support of the application and responded to questions from the Board. In response to the recommendations in the staff report, the applicant stated the following:

- Hesitant to change the color scheme and thinks there is sufficient variety.
- Will need to verify with engineer whether Lot 10 can be reoriented from North Alfred Street to front on the park/Montgomery Street elevation.
- Will remove the window hoods on the first story.
- Noted that a paired window was proposed in Phase II for the brick townhouses with projecting two-story bay, similar to the design of Lots 3-4 but that it was requested in Phase II to be a single window.

Smita Anand, architect for the applicant, spoke in support of the application and responded to questions from the Board.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Townhouse Units

Ms. Kelley generally agreed with the staff recommendations and stated that she is interested in hearing what the new window will be for this phase.

Mr. Duffy asked about paint colors in the future and how homeowners will be able to change them in the future (Mr. Shron responded that the HOA will approve paint color changes).

Mr. Meick inquired about the installation of solar collectors (Mr. Shron stated that the developer will not actually install solar collectors but a solar “rough-in” package will be available).

Ms. Rankin agreed with the comment to leave some of the painted brick units unpainted.

Chairman Conkey stated he did not have any comments on the townhouses but supported the additional windows at the loft levels.

Mr. Duffy made a motion to approve the townhouse portion of the project with Conditions #10-20 with minor modifications;

1. That the garage doors be the trim color;
2. That the window hoods for unit #7 be eliminated;
3. That units #13, 14 & 15 be unpainted brick; and
4. That unit #16 be restudied and brought back if the entry cannot face the park.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Meick and approved unanimously, 5-0.

Multi-Family Buildings

Ms. Rankin repeated her previous comment to consider stucco instead of HardiePanel. (Mr. Shron explained that a true cementitious stucco over masonry was very expensive and beyond the capabilities of this project). Ms. Rankin then requested examples of the successful use of HardiePanel. Ms. Rankin also asked to see vegetation along the garage elevation (Ms. Anand responded that there are planters in front of the parking garage vents).

Mr. Meick observed that the rooftop HVAC units were visible in Phase I. He agreed that screening might be worse than seeing the units but asked staff to insure that the units were placed in the least visible locations. He did not favor the spandrel option as he thought it made the building look too heavy.

Chairman Conkey noted that the spandrel option as proposed did look heavy because a dark color was used. He noted that his previous recommendation had been for a lighter color to be used to lighten it up and appear as a two-story window.

Mr. Duffy agreed with the staff recommendations #7-9 and was pleased with the courtyard entry piers.

Ms. Kelley liked the suggestion to remove the third sash on the two end buildings and found merit in both the spandrel and non-spandrel option. Ms. Kelley inquired about the proposed metal work scheme for balcony rails and garage vents.

Chairman Conkey approved of the spandrel and found it to visually lighten the building. The Chairman asked about commercial window options (Mr. Shron responded that an aluminum

window will not meet energy requirements and that they were considering a high-quality fiberglass or aluminum-clad wood window). Chairman Conkey noted that the garage intake vents could be a streetscape killer. He also noted that the proposed metalwork was not particularly interesting and urged the applicant to consider a decorative metal work that would be a feature. Chairman Conkey liked the expressed grid pattern with the HardiePanels. He reiterated his dislike for the use of split-faced block for the lintels noting that it diminished the overall quality of the project. He proposed the use of cast stone or decorative brick lintels, perhaps in an alternating brick color.

On a motion by Ms. Rankin, seconded by Mr. Duffy, the Board voted to defer the multi-family buildings and park, 5-0.

REASON

The Board generally agreed with the analysis in the Staff report and believed that the proposed scheme is a great improvement from the previous submissions. The Board advised the applicant to consider and study the staff recommendations and their comments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, March 23, 2011: Staff recommends deferral of the Certificate of Appropriateness, with the following recommendations for further study:

General

1. That the Board waive the screening requirements for the rooftop HVAC units and instead require the applicant to work with Staff, in the field, to locate the units so that they are not visible or are placed in the most subtle location feasible (previous BAR condition);
2. That the applicant use appropriate building materials, such as wood, composite, or synthetic materials which are high-quality, paintable, millable and solid throughout, for items such as door surrounds, front doors, railings and the like. Front doors shall be solid wood (Development-wide condition);
3. That the applicant propose windows that are in conformance with the *Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications*;
4. That the applicant work with Staff on the text and graphics of the historic marker and conform to the standards set forth in the City's recently adopted Wayfinding Program.
5. That the applicant work with Staff to determine the least obtrusive location for the mail boxes.
6. That the applicant adequately screen all utilities and trash receptacles from the street (public or private).

Multi-Family

7. That the applicant provide a materials board and samples for the multi-family buildings.
8. That the applicant simplify and coordinate the individual color palette for the multi-family buildings.
9. That the applicant provide the courtyard elevation for the center building.

Townhouse

10. That the location of the solar collectors on the individual townhouses be approved by BAR Staff prior to their installation to insure that they are either not visible or are

- minimally visible (previous BAR condition);
11. That all of the loft levels be painted the same color, either a light grey or light taupe, instead of the variety of subtle colors proposed by the applicant and that any exposed metal channels be painted or otherwise made non-reflective (previous BAR condition, with modification);
 12. That the garage doors may be painted the same color as the rear elevation of the townhouse where they are located or painted white to match the trim;
 13. That all visible roof materials (including porch roofs) be standing seam metal, metal shingles, slate or synthetic slate. (Development-wide condition);
 14. That the applicant continue to work with Staff to refine the door, window and trim treatments so that they are stylistically compatible and do not have a mix of styles on a single townhouse. (Development-wide condition);
 15. That the applicant revise the body color palette and propose new and different light fixtures.
 16. That all of the units adjacent to the park should front onto the park.
 17. That the applicant add windows to the side elevation of the loft level where possible.
 18. That the window hoods at the first floor of Lots 18 and 21 on Madison Street be removed.
 19. That the townhouse units on Lots 5-6 on the private street be a pair of twins.
 20. That the applicant restudy the fenestration of the brick townhouse on Lots 3-4 on the private street and consider adding a paired window at the third story.

BOARD ACTION, February 9, 2011 (January meeting was rescheduled due to inclement weather): Deferred for further study, 4-0.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board deferred approval of the application and asked the applicant to continue to refine the multi-family buildings with the following considerations:

1. Strengthen the differentiation between the end buildings and the center building through the use of architectural details and materials, while still maintaining a family resemblance;
2. Restudy the proposed arch entry feature at the entrances to the courtyards;
3. Strengthen the visual and physical projections on the buildings in plan and elevation and emphasize this through subtly different materials and colors;
4. Restudy the single fire exit doors on the west elevation of the center building to minimize its appearance as a door and to visually coordinate this element with the proportions of the surrounding fenestration.
5. Provide more information on the materials, colors and details of the multifamily buildings.
6. Provide additional information on the materials, colors and details of the townhouses and park.

SPEAKERS

Greg Shron, representing EYA and ARHA, made a brief introduction of Phase IV and noted that he was seeking comments from the Board rather than an approval at this time.

Smita Anand, architect for the applicant, spoke in support of the application and responded to

questions from the Board.

Brian "A.J." Jackson, representing EYA and ARHA, explained the change from two to three buildings from a financing perspective.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Ms. Rankin asked about the townhouse elevations and wanted to clear that the townhouses still need work before the applicant requests approval for them. Mr. Cox explained that the townhouse elevations were only being provided at this time as context for the multifamily buildings. Ms. Rankin thought that all three buildings looked identical and wanted the applicant to further explore ways to differentiate the buildings. She also stated that more differentiation will break up the massing. Ms. Rankin found this scheme to be an improvement over the previous scheme and moving in the right direction.

Ms. Anand responded that they will remove an accent band above the first story windows on the center building so that it is only on the two end buildings, to differentiate the three buildings. She also commented that the fiber cement panels will be different colors on the end buildings. Mr. Cox stated that staff's goal is to ensure there is no perception of a change in quality of materials among the buildings. Ms. Anand also noted that they will restudy the courtyard arches to make them simpler and relate to the iron grates at the garage entrance.

Ms. Kelley stated that she was pleased with the general direction of the design and stressed that it should be kept simple but wanted to see an increased depth of the projecting elements. She agreed with the staff recommendations. She also advised the applicant to study the windows for these buildings and the townhouses as she is disappointed with the amount of vinyl in the windows that have already been approved in other phases of the project.

Mr. Duffy agreed that this scheme was a significant step forward and agreed with the staff review. He reiterated Ms. Kelley's window comment. He commented that a change in the projections and recesses would add dimension. He requested details of the balconies. He agreed with the comment to restudy the arches and advised that the applicant continue to study (and simplify) the entrance from the courtyards. He advised the applicant to focus on public spaces and ways to bring the residents together socially.

Chairman Conkey supported the general direction of the plan and liked the three building scheme, commenting that it was a more sophisticated and developed plan. Chairman Conkey had several questions for the applicant. First, he asked about the choice of windows and inquired whether these buildings would have metal windows -- which are generally more appropriate for a multi-family building. Mr. Shron responded that commercial aluminum windows would be too expensive and that the choice of windows will be a challenge because of strict energy requirements and the noise from Route 1. Mr. Shron said they would research the windows further and consider a wood-like fiberglass product or high-quality aluminum-clad. Chairman Conkey stated that the drawings should accurately portray the window type. Chairman Conkey asked about the split-face concrete masonry unit and said that he personally had an issue with head joints in masonry lintels. He recommended the use of precast heads to avoid joints. He encouraged the use of different brick colors. He was also concerned about the use of

HardiePanel because the joint detailing is generally more appropriate for single-family residential use and he would prefer a stucco finish in these locations. Chairman Conkey also expressed concern about the garage screens/metal grills because the noise and odors from the garage tend to kill adjacent street life. He recommended the addition of vegetation and asked if the applicant could show how the sidewalk relates to the screening. Chairman Conkey also offered a recommendation that the building corners be elevated at the parapet to visually reinforce the vertically. He also suggested exploring windows that were two stories in height with a spandrel at the upper levels to recall the scale of factory windows.

On a motion by Mr. Duffy, seconded by Ms. Kelley, the Board voted to defer the application, 4-0.

REASON

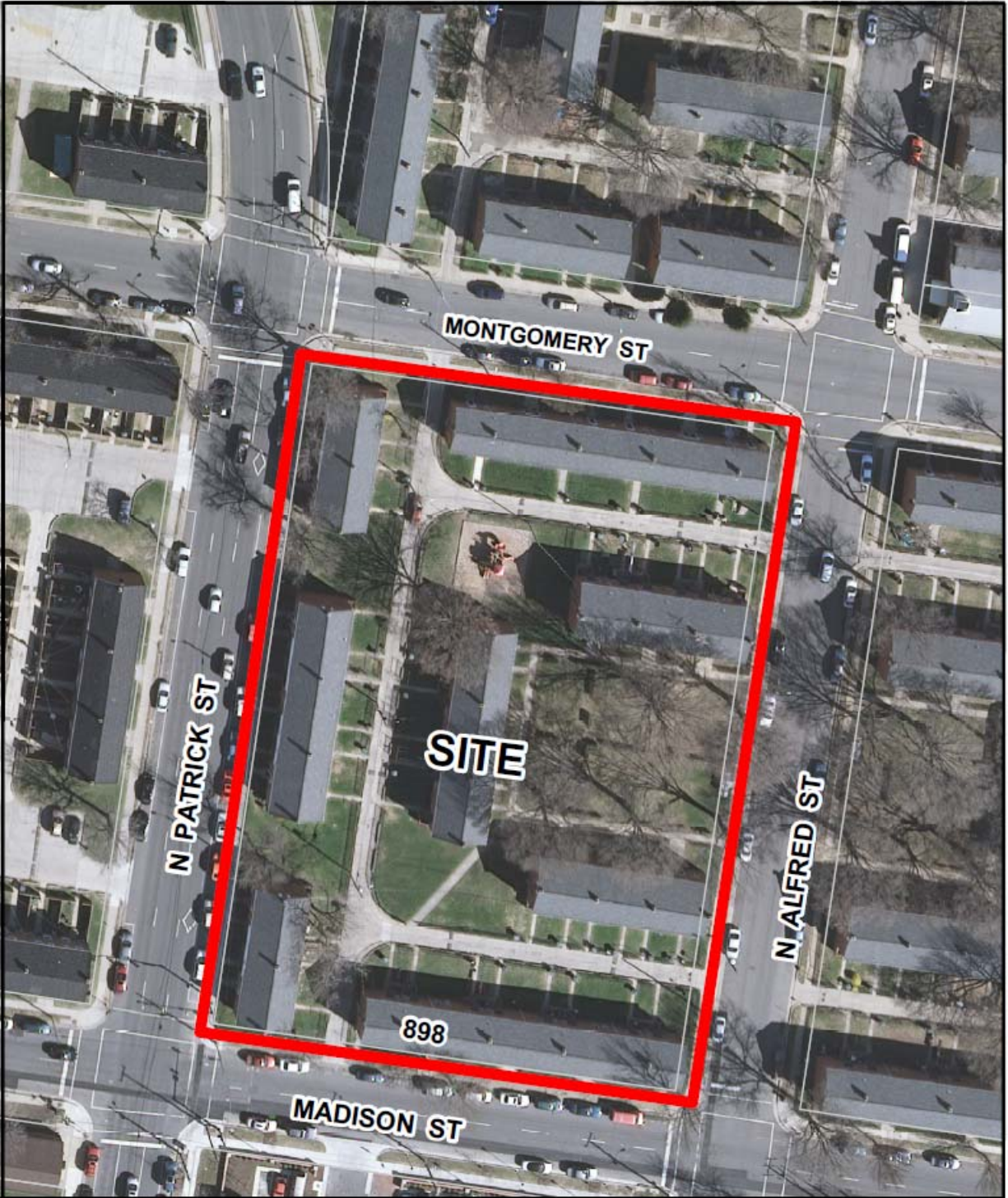
The Board generally agreed with the analysis in the Staff report and believed the proposed scheme is a great improvement from the concept review. The Board advised the applicant to consider and study the staff recommendations and their comments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, January 26, 2011: Staff recommends that the Board defer approval of the application and ask the applicant to continue to refine the multi-family buildings with the following considerations:

1. Strengthen the differentiation between the end buildings and the center building through the use of architectural details and materials, while still maintaining a family resemblance;
2. Restudy the proposed arch entry feature at the entrances to the courtyards;
3. Strengthen the visual and physical projections on the buildings in plan and elevation and emphasize this through subtly different materials and colors;
4. Restudy the single fire exit doors on the west elevation of the center building to minimize its appearance as a door and to visually coordinate this element with the proportions of the surrounding fenestration.
5. Provide more information on the materials, colors and details of the multifamily buildings.
6. Provide additional information on the materials, colors and details of the townhouses and park.

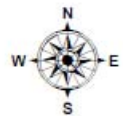
*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE: In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period. In the case for a certificate or permit for a project that requires a development special use permit or site plan under section 11-400 of the zoning ordinance, the period of validity shall be coincident with the validity of the development special use permit or site plan pursuant to section 11-418 of the ordinance.

**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, 703-746-4200 for further information.



BAR CASE #2011-0011

Phase IV



Update: At the March 23, 2011 hearing, the Board approved the townhouse portion of Phase IV, with conditions. The Board deferred a decision on the multi-family buildings and the park. Therefore, this report does not address or comment upon the townhouse portion of this project.

Note: The applicant has bypassed Phase III in order to move forward on the multi-family buildings and better serve the phasing and delivery of certain unit types. While it is the third construction phase to come before the Board, to avoid confusion, it will continue to be known as Phase IV because that is the way this block was designated on the original plans.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant has received approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of 21 townhouse units (17 single-family and 4 triplexes) and is currently requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for three multi-family buildings, certain park elements, and a waiver of the rooftop screening requirement for Phase IV of the James Bland Redevelopment Project, located on the block bounded by North Alfred Street, Madison Street, North Patrick Street and Montgomery Street.

Phase IV is located on the block immediately to the north of the Charles Houston Recreation Center and immediately to the west of Phase II, which was approved by the BAR in May 2010. The entire redevelopment project consists of five phases on five contiguous city blocks.

Prior Reviews and Approvals for the James Bland Redevelopment:

September 24, 2008: Approval of Permit to Demolish and Concept Approval (BAR Case #2008-0150/0151).

October 2008: Development Special Use Permit approved by Planning Commission and City Council (DSP #2008-0013).

May 27, 2009: Approval of Certificate of Appropriateness and Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement for Phase I (BAR Case #2009-0088/0089).

May 26, 2010: Approval of Certificate of Appropriateness and Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement for Phase II (BAR Case #2010-0070).

February 9, 2011: Change to previously approved plans for windows on certain units in Phase I (rear alley elevations of market-rate units and all ARHA units)

March 2011: Development Special Use Permit (DSP #2011-0003) approved by Planning Commission and City Council for changes in Phase IV from the original approval

March 23, 2011 Approval of Certificate of Appropriateness for townhouse portion of Phase IV and deferral of multi-family buildings and park elements

Concept Review

The applicant received concept approval for the five block redevelopment project from the BAR in 2008, prior to obtaining approval from the Planning Commission and City Council. The BAR concept review process was established as a way to give applicants an early indication as to whether the project they propose would ultimately gain approval from the BAR. At concept review, the Board evaluates the project's "scale, mass and general architectural character" and determines whether the overall plan is compatible with the surrounding historic district. The original concept review also included approval of two multi-family buildings in Phase IV. The applicant has since revised the design of the multi-family buildings to be three rather than two buildings. This three building revision was strongly supported by the Board at the previous hearing.

Certificate of Appropriateness Review

At this stage, the BAR is reviewing the details of Phase IV to determine whether the final design for Phase IV complies with the Board's standards and the *Design Guidelines*, focusing on colors, materials, proportions, and relationships between architectural elements. Review will not include discussion of the height or mass of the project unless it was specifically exempted in the concept review approval.

Phase IV Project Description

Phase IV is an entire block that will have 21 townhouses, three multi-family buildings and a park. A private street with a public access easement will run north-south, approximately in the middle of the block. During concept approval, the Board supported two multi-family buildings of this general size on the western half of the block. While the massing, scale and general architectural character remain similar to what was approved during the concept review, there will now be three, four-story multi-family buildings instead of two, four-story buildings. The original plan was for two multi-family buildings with a mix of ARHA on the lower levels and multi-family units above. For financing reasons, the applicant now proposes that the two smaller buildings will have only ARHA units and the larger center building will have only market-rate units. To the east of the private street will be the portion of the block with 21 mixed townhouse units. The northeastern portion of this block will have a small park that will be open to the public. The Board previously reviewed and endorsed the design of the park in concept at the October 2010 BAR hearing.

Multi-Family Buildings (North Patrick Street)

The three multi-family buildings are bounded by North Patrick Street, Madison Street, Montgomery Street and a private street. The two smaller buildings will each house 16 ARHA units and will measure approximately 70 feet by 76 feet. The center market-rate building will have 44 units and will measure approximately 172 feet by 76 feet. Two courtyards, one each between the center building and the end buildings, will be 20 feet in width and will function as the primary entrances for both ARHA and market rate condominium units to provide an opportunity for social interaction between residents on a daily basis.

Each building is four stories with a flat roof. The buildings have an industrial architectural character with a pronounced fenestration. The overall design composition of the elevations uses the classical form of a base, middle and capital and the three buildings generally form a five part

Palladian plan (a central building with hyphens connecting smaller buildings on each side.) The base and middle will be predominantly brick with a split-face CMU string course separating the two on the ARHA buildings. The top floor, or capital level, will be lighter in color with a strong cornice line and HardiePanel fiber cement wall material. All of the buildings will have alternating projections to break up the massing.

The Board has reviewed and commented upon these buildings at the rescheduled January meeting held on February 9, 2011 and the March 23, 2011 hearing. The Board felt that the proposed multi-family building design was a significant improvement over what had been presented during concept review, and made the following additional comments at the most recent hearing (Staff recommendations with Board comments):

1. That the applicant provide a materials board and samples for the multi-family buildings and that the applicant propose a different material for the sills and headers than split-face block.
2. That the applicant simplify and coordinate the individual color palette for the multi-family buildings.
3. That the applicant provide the courtyard elevation for the center building.
4. That the applicant refine the spandrel element on the center building and work to lighten this element.
5. That the applicant consider stucco in place of the HardiePanel.

Since the previous hearing and after meeting with Staff, the applicant has made the following changes:

1. Reduced the window openings on the interior courtyard elevations to be in conformance with building and fire code regulations.
2. Eliminated the fixed "third" sash under the double-hung window pairs on the two end buildings to be compatible with the new courtyard elevations and to improve the window/wall proportions.
3. Eliminated spandrels on the two end buildings, reduced spandrels on the center building so they only occur at the triple windows and lightened the color of the spandrel so that it correlates with the HardiePanel above.
4. Reproportioned garage intake grills and added green screen plant supports.
5. Provided examples of the use of HardiePanels and split-face block sills and headers at other projects.
6. Revised the proposed metalwork for the balconies, garage intake grills and courtyard piers.

Materials

The applicant has submitted materials for the multi-family buildings in this phase which include:

Wall Material:	Brick and HardiePanel
Windows:	Jeld-Wen aluminum-clad casement and fixed windows Split-face block sills and headers
Doors:	Jeld-Wen aluminum-clad doors

Trim: Metal (cream and dark gray)

Park

As part of the concept approval, the Board made the following condition:

That the applicant work with Staff as the design of the park spaces evolves to ensure compatibility with the character of the district as relates to setting, landscape, the street grid and public space.

Park Overview

The park will be located at the southwest corner of North Alfred and Montgomery Streets. The park will have open space for passive recreation and informal gatherings as well as an active children's play area. The proposed design has a central lawn with a small stage/gathering space at one end. The pavers, play equipment and other features have a musical theme, such as a climbable "base cleft" mound. The park is accessed from multiple walkways from the adjacent sidewalks. The park will be enclosed by a low metal fence and trees. There will also be a different low metal fence around a portion of the children's play area though it will not enclose the space. While City-owned and open to the public, the park and associated amenities will be maintained by the HOA. The actual details of the park will be reviewed administratively by Staff with the final site plan for that block, which likely will not be submitted until 2012. The applicant proposes metal and wood slat park benches. The light fixture will be the standard City colonial style light pole.

At their September 23, 2010 meeting, the Park and Recreation Commission reviewed the conceptual design of the park and received public comments. On October 21, 2010, the Commission recommended approval of the conceptual plan with two conditions. First, the active play area of the park should be less of a focus and should be moved to a corner or side of the park; and, second, the Arts Commission should be made aware of the park design as it is further developed during the final site plan review. The park design must meet the requirements of the DSUP conditions and must be to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and RP&CA. The Board reviewed and endorsed the park concept at the October 2010 meeting.

II. HISTORY:

Parker-Gray has been recognized as a local historic district since 1984, with review and approval of exterior alterations, demolition and new construction by the by the Parker-Gray Board of Architecture Review. The boundaries for the locally designated district include all five blocks of James Bland Homes.

In early 2007, the City began the process of nominating the Uptown/Parker-Gray neighborhood to the National Register of Historic Places. The boundaries of the Uptown/Parker-Gray historic district encompass the local district as well as a number of additional blocks. On January 12, 2010, the National Park Service listed the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. Prior to that, in June 2008, the State of Virginia listed the historic district on the Virginia Landmarks Register.

In advance of the demolition of the existing buildings in Phase I, the applicant thoroughly documented James Bland Homes as required by the BAR when approving the Permit to Demolish. The documentary requirements were: a written history, HABS/HAER level measured drawings and photo documentation. Copies of the materials are located in both the Kate Waller Barrett Library and the Alexandria Black History Resource Center.

III. ANALYSIS

Multi-Family Buildings

Staff finds the proposed changes to the multi-family buildings to be an improvement from the previous hearing. The overall design is a substantial improvement from what was approved during concept review and the applicant has successfully addressed the majority of the comments from the Board and Staff over the past few months. What follows is a review of the Board's comments and how they have been addressed by the applicant.

That the applicant provide a materials board and samples for the multi-family buildings and that the applicant propose a different material for the sills and headers than split-face block.

The applicant has provided a materials board for many of the materials proposed. The applicant continues to propose split-face block for sills and lintels although it has been suggested several times to consider an alternate material such as brick or cast-stone. The applicant has provided photographs showing the proposed split-face block used in this way. While the use of a different color brick for the lintels would be preferable, Staff has no strong objection to the use of split-face block.

The applicant has submitted specifications for Jeld-Wen aluminum-clad windows and doors. The proposed finish will be a dark bronze color to match what is represented in the elevation drawings. The windows will be a combination of casements with intermediate horizontal rails and fixed sash. Staff has no objection to the proposed window but recommends that the applicant submit full window specifications for the proposed windows prior to applying for building permits to ensure conformance with the *Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications*.

That the applicant simplify and coordinate the individual color palette for the multi-family buildings.

The applicant has simplified and coordinated the color palette from the previous submissions. The applicant now proposes the same color of HardiePanel throughout the building for all three buildings. It is a cream color and matches the metal wrapped cornice. In addition it complements the color of the proposed split face block. While the applicant has proposed two different brick colors (one for the two end buildings and one for the center building). While Staff has no objection to either of the proposed colors, Staff also finds that the colors are so similar that this difference will barely be discernable in the field and the visual difference between the buildings is now largely due to the different proportions of the windows in each.

That the applicant provide the courtyard elevation for the center building.

After the previous hearing the applicant realized that all courtyard elevations needed to be revised to reduce the number of window openings due to fire and building code regulations. The revised courtyard elevations feature fewer “voids” and more “solid” area. Because of the relationship of these buildings and the narrowness of the courtyards, these elevations will only be visible in perspective. Staff finds these elevations are appropriately scaled and detailed. On the center building courtyard elevations, the spandrel feature is carried around the corner but not across the entire courtyard elevation. In addition, to emphasize the entry of this building, a lighter color (same split-face block as sills and lintels) is used at the entryway. The applicant has also lightened the metal canopies at building entries for all three buildings through the addition of glass panels.

The most significant revision as a result of the revised courtyard elevations is the removal of the fixed “third” sash on the end buildings. Staff had previously suggested this option. With the change to the courtyard elevations, it seemed most logical to continue that change throughout the two end buildings. Staff finds this revision to be an improvement to the overall design of the end buildings and finds that these buildings better anchor their corner locations. Furthermore, this change presents a desirable distinct, yet subtle, differentiation among the buildings.

That the applicant refine the spandrel element on the center building and work to lighten this element.

The applicant has revised this element by changing from the dark panel to a lighter color that will match the HardiePanel on other elements of the building. Staff finds this to be acceptable because it creates cohesion by using the same material found elsewhere on the building. Applied trim breaks the spandrel into proportions that relate to the window sash above and below.

That the applicant consider stucco in place of the HardiePanel.

The applicant continues to propose HardiePanel in a grid form for the fourth floor and building insets. The applicant has provided an example of how this has been used in other projects and a detail of how the HardiePanel will meet the brick wall so that it has a clean appearance. Staff has no objection to the use of HardiePanel in this case. However, Staff notes that the applicant’s drawings indicate a HardiePanel grid proportion above the windows on the fourth story to be rectangular (vertically oriented) in appearance in one scheme and square in other drawings. Staff prefers the square proportion and asks the applicant to clarify this aspect of the grid.

Courtyards

During previous hearings, the Board stated that the courtyards should be well-designed public spaces for entry to the buildings. The current proposal features a collection of oversized planters (measuring between three and four feet in height) to accommodate shrubs and trees. A small brick planter attached to the building is provided at the courtyard entries. While the Board’s purview does not include landscape design or plant materials, the Board does review permanent planters. The *Design Guidelines* state that “planters can contribute to a friendly and inviting streetscape. Blooming plants provide color and variety to the streetscape and soften hard edges

of buildings. At the same time, proliferation of planters in the front of a building and on a sidewalk can create pedestrian obstacles and a cluttered appearance.” Staff conceptually supports the use of planters in the courtyards but recommends that they be appropriately scaled and designed to create an inviting entry space that does not compete with the architecture or clutter the space and that maintain a visually open and safe environment. Staff recommends that the Board allow the applicant to work with BAR and Development Staff to create appropriately scaled and designed planters for the courtyards.

Colors and Materials

As a large and highly visible project within the Parker-Gray Historic District, the Board and Staff have consistently emphasized that high-quality materials, details, and finishes would be expected for this project. New materials, such as HardiePlank siding and trim, are often approved by the Board for new construction and are appropriately used throughout this project. In addition, the inclusion of some traditional materials and stylistically historic details make this new construction compatible with the existing historic fabric.

However, since approval of the previous phases, the Board has amended several of its policies as part of the Modern and Sustainable Materials initiative. Staff notes that the windows approved for the previous phases are not in conformance with the *Alexandria Window Performance Specifications* as adopted as part of the *Window Policy*. Therefore, windows for this phase, and all subsequent phases, must be in conformance with the new policy. Any other materials that the applicant proposes to use, or change from prior approvals, must be in conformance with all BAR-adopted policies. This does allow the applicant more flexibility going forward, since this is new construction. While the DSUP approval stipulated certain specific materials that must be used (for example, wood front doors), there is some freedom to use fiberglass doors in other areas or to use high-quality aluminum-clad windows.

Staff finds that the proposed materials for the multi-family buildings allow for a clear expression of these buildings as distinct from the townhouses. The use of brick, HardiePanel in a defined grid pattern, and modern canopies are all appropriate. The applicant has revised the metalwork for the balconies, entry piers and garage intake grilles. While the metalwork will not be an artistic or hand crafted element as suggested previously, the applicant has refined the proposed metalwork materials and connections details that Staff believes will result in a high-quality design. In addition, at the garage intake areas, the applicant has refined the proportions of these openings by adding a substantial mullion. The applicant also proposes green screens for three of these openings which will soften this streetscape and hopefully mitigate the fumes from the garage.

Park

BAR members are selected by City Council for their “demonstrated interest, experience, or education in history, architecture or historic preservation.” The authority of the BAR under sec. 10-200 of the Zoning Ordinance is fairly broad but does not specifically address the design of a public park. The Board is asked in sec. 10-201(F) “To assure that new structures, additions, landscaping and related elements be in harmony with their historical and architectural settings and environs.” A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for “exterior architectural features”

but the *Design Guidelines* do not have a chapter explaining how the various elements of a park should relate to the “architectural character and scale of the district.”

By past practice, plant materials, children’s play equipment and paving (except where used for parking) are not reviewed by the BAR. However, permanent planters, fences, garden walls, street furniture and the exterior lighting of buildings are described in the *Design Guidelines* and require approval. Therefore, the detailed design of certain architectural elements of this park, such as fences and piers, the brick wall and the seating wall, and possibly the stage, are the only elements within the Board’s purview. Artwork and landscape features will not require approval, though the BAR’s comments are welcome if, in the Board’s opinion, these features would conflict with the architectural character and scale of the district.

Staff continues to support the conceptual design of the park and believes that the choice of a musically themed park is appropriate as a reference to James Bland, a popular songwriter and musician who was noted for breaking racial barriers in the music industry.¹ Staff has no objection to the majority of the proposed park materials within the Board’s purview, including the open low metal perimeter fence with brick piers and traditional park benches. Staff finds that the semi-circular different low metal fence adjacent to the lawn and play area is not appropriate. The placement of this fence is illogical and the use of a different low metal fence design conflicts with the perimeter fence. After confirming with both Parks and Development Staff that this interior fence is not required, Staff recommends that the fence be omitted.

Staff will work with the applicant on the text and graphics of the historical marker and will also ensure that it conforms to the City’s recently adopted Wayfinding Program.

Additional Recommendations

Staff has retained some of the more general development-wide conditions approved by the BAR for Phases I and II.

Rooftop HVAC Screening

Staff believes that the most appropriate way to address the visibility of rooftop HVAC condensers is to require the applicant to work with Staff, in the field, to place the units in a location that is either not visible or only minimally so. Staff generally discourages the use of rooftop screening around condensers since the larger structure can draw more attention to the screening than the HVAC unit would have by itself. This is very relevant in this project because there will be a significant number of rooftop units.

Solar Collectors

Staff proposes to treat approval of the solar collectors similar to the way rooftop HVAC condensers will be handled. The applicant proposes to install the necessary hardware for six solar panels to be located on the roofs of most unit types; however, installation of the units themselves will be the responsibility of the future property owner. The solar panels specified by the applicant would measure roughly 6 feet by 5 ¼ feet. They would be placed at an angle, with

¹ *Documentary Study and Archaeological Resource Assessment for the James Bland Homes, City of Alexandria, VA.* Prepared by Boyd Sipe and Kimberly Snyder (Thunderbird Archaeology) in consultation with History Matters, LLC. February 2010.

the highest point 14 inches above the flat roof in order to maximize exposure to the sun. Instead of returning to the BAR for approval of the solar collectors on each unit, Staff recommends that the property owner, or the developer, work with BAR Staff to determine the most appropriate location for the solar collectors. It may be necessary to install mock-ups in the field so that Staff can determine the visibility of the solar collectors.

Mailboxes

The Board initially recommended that the applicant inquire about whether the USPS would be willing to deliver mail to the individual units within the development. Unfortunately, that is not feasible and ganged mailboxes must be installed. Staff finds that the proposed mailbox locations can be made less obtrusive and recommends that the applicant work with Staff for appropriate placement.

Staff recommends approval of this application for the multi-family buildings, park design, waiver of rooftop HVAC screening requirement, and other general aspects of Phase IV of the James Bland Redevelopment with the recommendations discussed above.

STAFF:

Catherine Miliaras, Urban Planner, Historic Preservation Section
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Planning & Zoning (Development):

The applicant must comply with DSUP condition #17 related to architecture/site planning. (The applicant has complied with many of these conditions already).

The applicant shall provide the following building refinements to the satisfaction of the Director of P&Z:

General

- a. All HVAC units shall be located on the roof and not visible from public or private streets.
- b. All at-grade utilities shall be screened with landscaping or a fence/wall.
- c. The primary exterior materials for each unit shall be limited to masonry, precast, stucco, wood or cementitious siding. Secondary trim and accent elements may include composite materials if approved by the BAR. Samples of all materials shall be provided.
- d. Porches shall be wood and stoops shall be brick or metal and porch railings shall be a single material, either wood, or metal. Composite materials may be used in lieu of wood where specifically approved by the BAR.
- e. Chimney enclosures shall be brick, and watertables, exposed foundations shall be brick.
- f. Fireplace vents, flues, vent stacks and other similar protrusions shall not be permitted on any public street or private street frontage including corner units. Furnace vents shall discharge through the roof or the rear facade. HVAC vents or associated elements shall not be visible from a public street. Roof penetrations shall be confined to the rear of the building.
- g. Pitched roofs shall be standing seam metal (painted, galvanized or terne coated) and shingles shall be slate or metal, or a comparable high quality material approved by the Board of Architectural Review. (City Council)
- h. Fences located within the front and/or side yards shall be made of painted wood or metal with a maximum of 30" to 42" height with a minimum of 50% openness.
- i. All retaining walls shall be brick or stone.
- j. Fixed plantation shutters shall be installed for all windows within the townhouse tandem garages facing the public or private street.

Townhouse

- k. Continue to work with Staff to enhance the side and rear elevations of the townhouse units and ARHA flats.
- l. Continue to work with Staff to reduce the actual or perceived height of the south facing facades of the market rate and ARHA units on Wythe Street.
- m. Useable front porches shall be added to 10-12 of the townhouses and/or ARHA triplex flats with the locations to be determined in consultation with Staff. All porches shall be 6 - 8 feet deep.

Alley Houses

- n. Continue to work with Staff to address the perceived mass and scale and refine details of these buildings.

Multifamily Buildings

- o. Continue to work with Staff to enhance elevations of the multi-family buildings.
- p. North multifamily building: This building shall be refined by breaking its expression into subunits so that each of the architectural expressions has a consistent relationship to the geometry of the curved street, without modifying the footprint of the building.
- q. Architectural expression, multifamily buildings: the three proposed multifamily buildings shall be redesigned to the satisfaction of the Director, P&Z, such that each building expresses a clear and identifiable architectural style; further, the two south buildings shall be redesigned not to appear as twin buildings, and the north multifamily building shall be redesigned to express a smaller scale through subdivision of its mass into three visually distinct units.
- r. Entries at multifamily buildings: Building entries shall be designed to create a prominent and welcoming presence for all three buildings.
- s. The design of the multi family buildings shall be subject to the requirements herein to the satisfaction of the Director of P&Z and the issues shall be addressed prior to public hearing before the Parker-Gray BAR. (P&Z) (PC)

P&Z Development Staff Findings for Phase IV (from comments for March 23, 2011 hearing):

- F1. Site planning and architecture is consistent with DSUP and CDD plan approvals.
- F2. Design and Detail of the revised multi-family buildings are consistent with the recently approved amendments approved for these buildings.
- F3. Paint colors for the townhouses appear fine. We have received some feedback from the City Council and members of the community that some of the townhouse colors may be including too many pastel colors. However, that does not seem to be the case in this submission. We note that three of the townhouses are planned to be the same yellow color. Perhaps one of them could be a darker yellow or a light beige color to add to the variety.
- F4. The window sizes of the rear elevation of unit #10 appear small.
- F5. It would be nice to have additional windows on the rear of units #18, 21, & 7 as only one window is shown in these ARHA buildings.
- R1. Recommend that not all three of the brick units (13-15) be painted which will add variety and address concerns that there are few brick buildings being included in this project.

Code Administration:

- C1 Building, plumbing, and electrical permits are required to be issued prior to the start of work.
- C2 Five sets of plans are required to be submitted for review prior to the issuance of the permits.
- C3 All four story and multi-family buildings (three or more dwelling units) will be reviewed under the 2009 IBC.

Alexandria Archaeology (from previous case):

Archaeology Conditions

1. Archaeological work shall be completed in compliance with the Programmatic Agreement between the City of Alexandria, GPB Associates LLC, the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office Regarding the Redevelopment of the James Bland Public Housing, City of Alexandria.
2. The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Demolition; Basement/Foundation plans; Erosion and Sediment Control; Grading; Utilities, etc.) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
 - a. All required archaeological preservation measures shall be completed prior to ground-disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance) or a Resource Management Plan must be in place to recover significant resources in concert with construction activities. To confirm, call Alexandria Archaeology at (703) 838-4399.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
 - c. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
3. The final site plan shall not be released until the City archaeologist confirms that all archaeological field work has been completed or that an approved Resource Management Plan is in place.
4. Certificates of Occupancy will not be issued for this property until the final archaeological report has been received and approved by the City Archaeologist.

Open Space

1. Continue to work with City staff to incorporate historic character into the design and to investigate the potential for historical interpretation on the site, including the creation and placement of interpretive markers. The consultant shall provide text and graphics for signage subject to approval by the Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, and the Planning Department.

Code

- C-1 All required archaeological preservation measures shall be completed in compliance with Section 11-411 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Findings:

F-1 Documentary research conducted by Thunderbird Archaeology found no definite evidence of structures on this block prior to and during the Civil War; however, it is possible that refugee slaves may have settled in the vicinity during the war. Residential development in this area was occurring by the third quarter of the 19th century. City directories and other archival sources show that most residents of the project area were African American laborers, although Euro-American laborers and a few skilled workers, tradesmen and professionals were also present. In the early 20th century, the project area developed primarily as an African American neighborhood. The area therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight primarily into 19th and early 20th-century domestic activities.

Transportation and Environmental Services (from previous BAR case):

Recommendations:

Comply with all requirements of DSP2008-00013 and Site Plan DSP2010-00001. (T&ES)

V. IMAGES

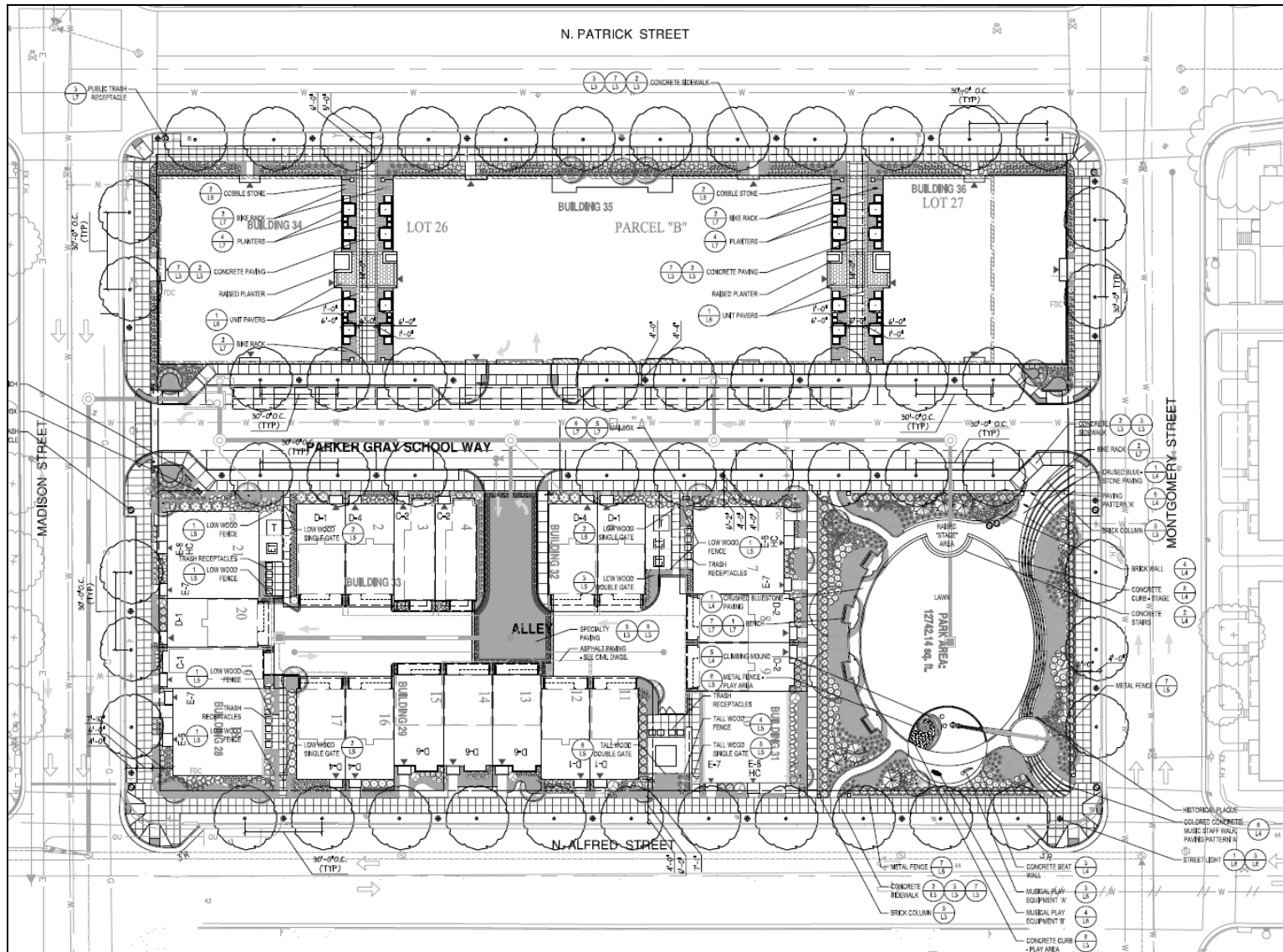


Figure 1. Phase IV Site Plan.



Figure 2. Previous scheme for multi-family buildings, North Patrick Street elevation.



Figure 3. Current scheme for multi-family buildings, North Patrick Street elevation.



Figure 4. Previous scheme for multi-family buildings, private street elevation.



Figure 5. Current scheme for multi-family buildings, private street elevation.



Figure 6. Current side (north and south) elevations of multi-family buildings.

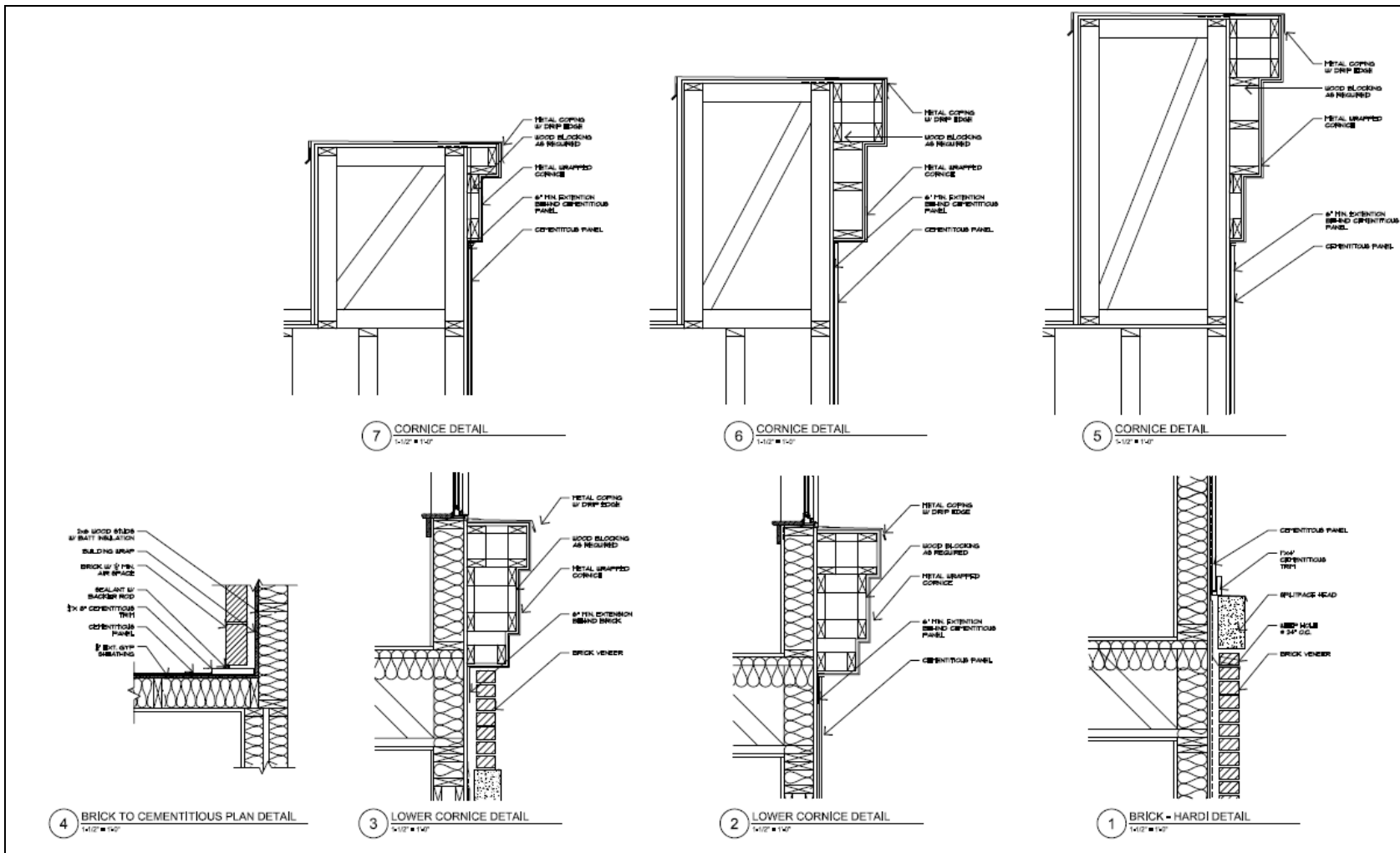


Figure 7. Cornice and HardiePanel details on multi-family buildings.



Figure 9. Proposed materials board.



Figure 10. Examples of the use of split-face block for sills and lintels.



Figure 11. Example of HardiePanel with grid design.



Figure 12. Proposed courtyard design with planters (with end building courtyard elevation).



Figure 13. Proposed courtyard design with planters (with center building courtyard elevation).

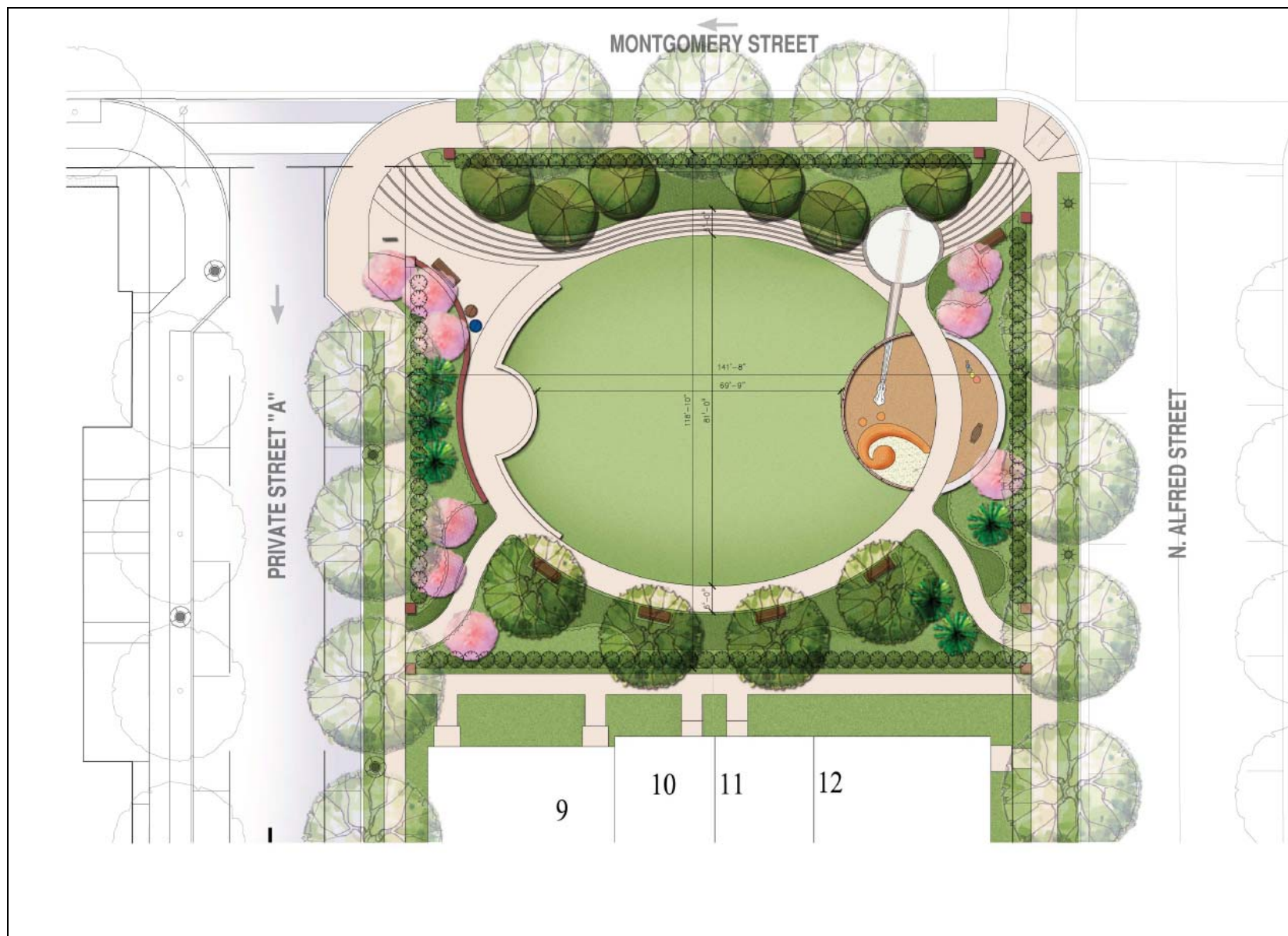


Figure 14. Park Design.

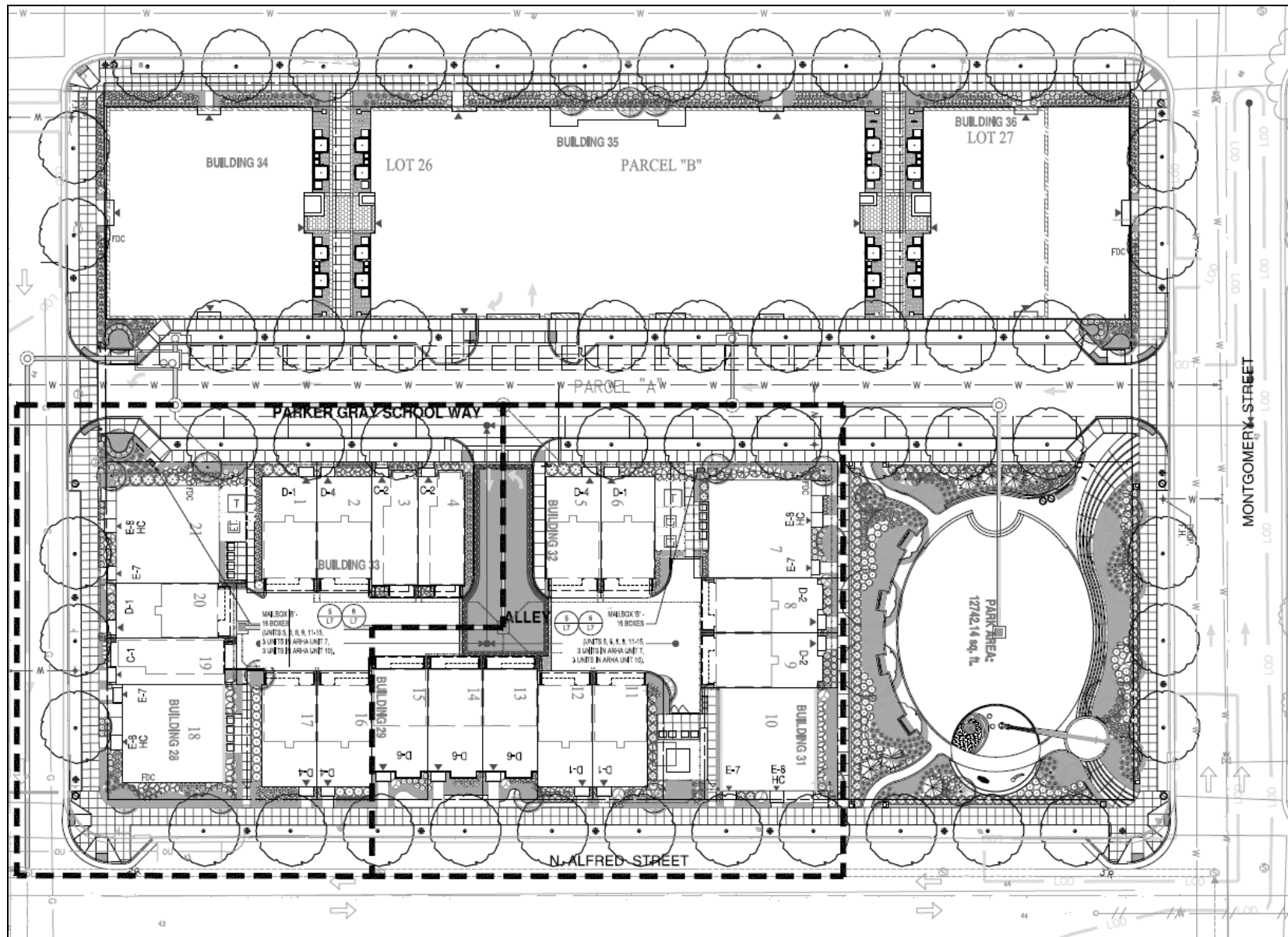


Figure 15. Proposed mailbox plan.

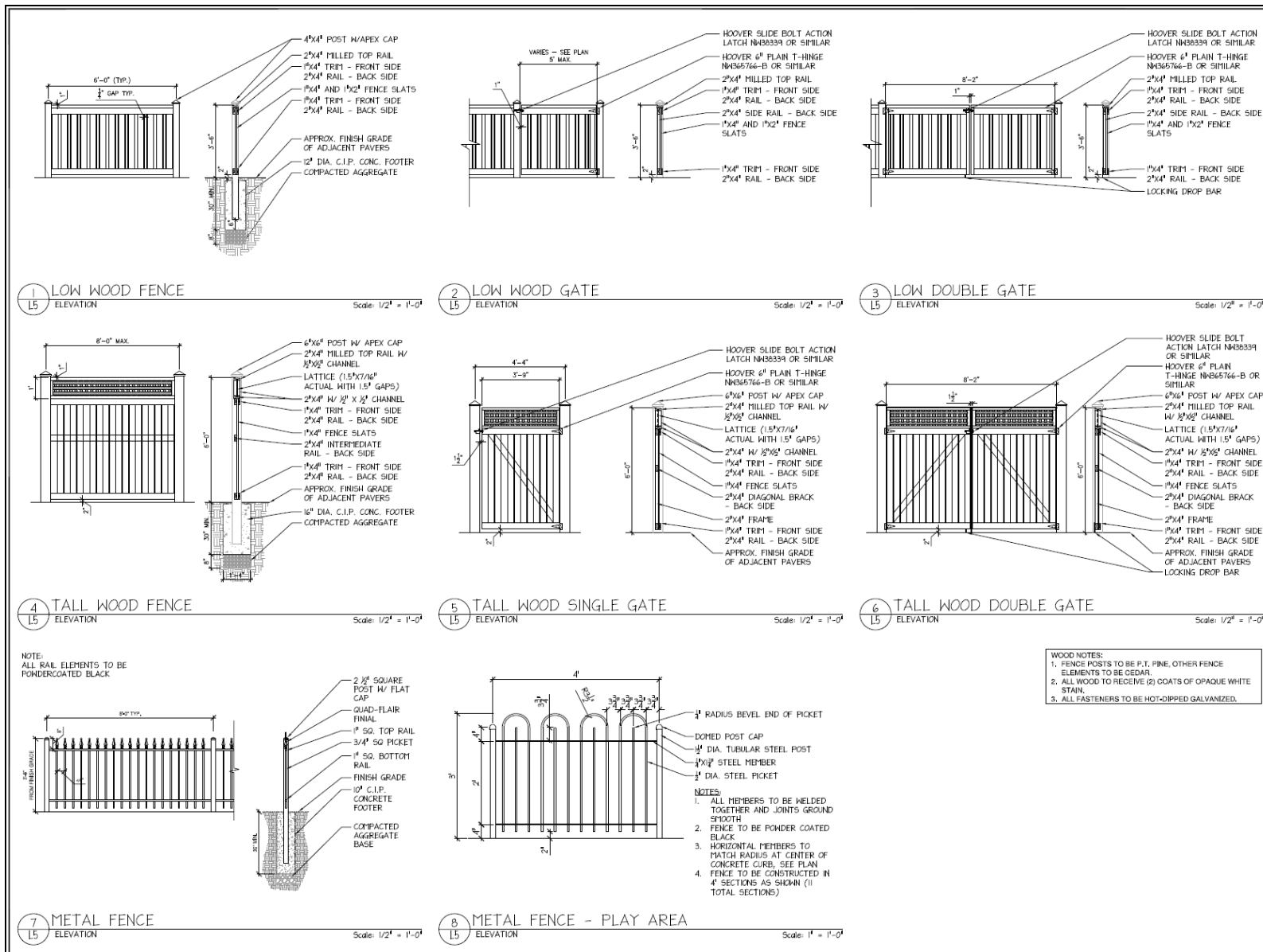


Figure 16. Hardscape details.

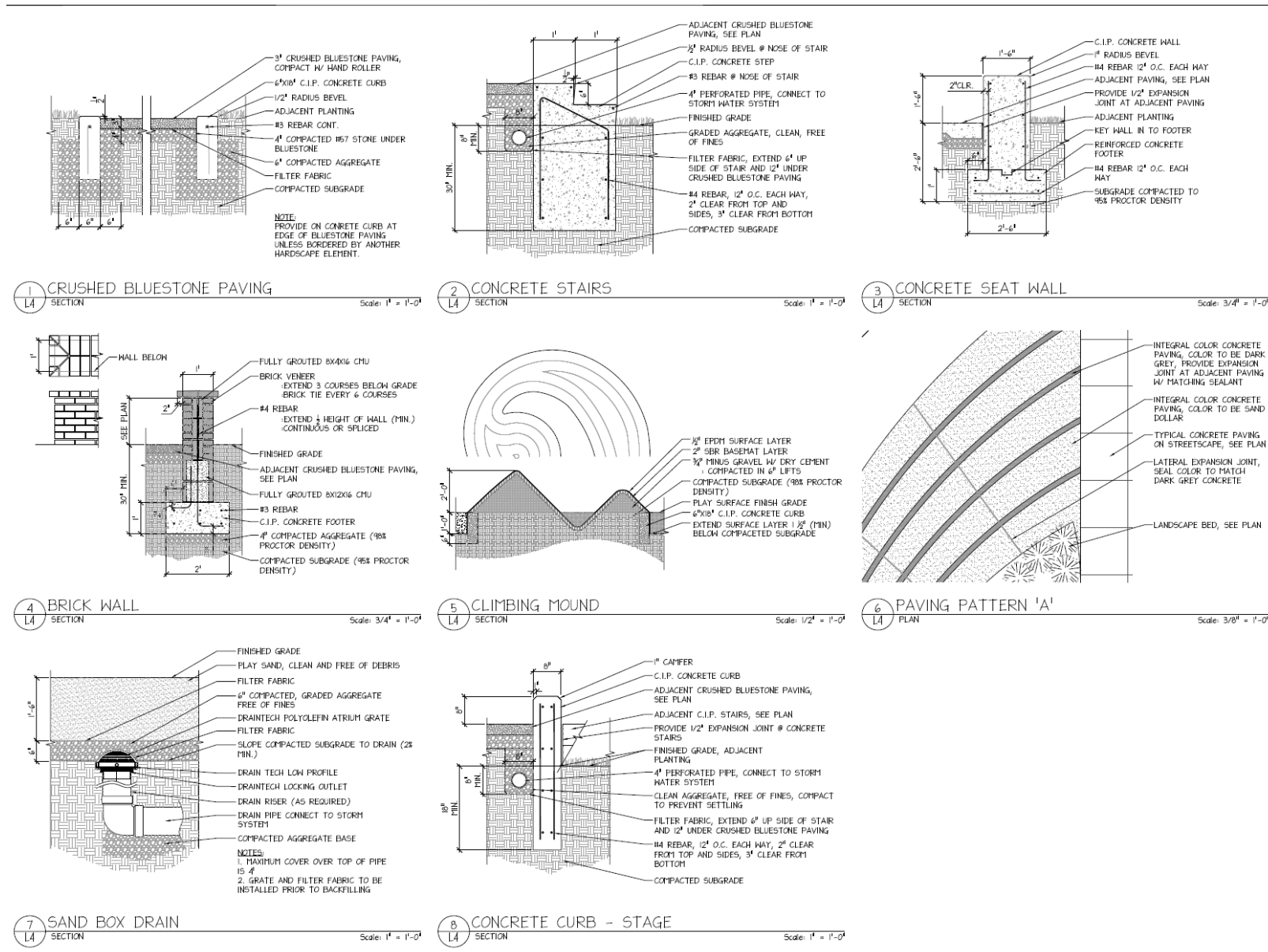


Figure 17. Hardscape details.

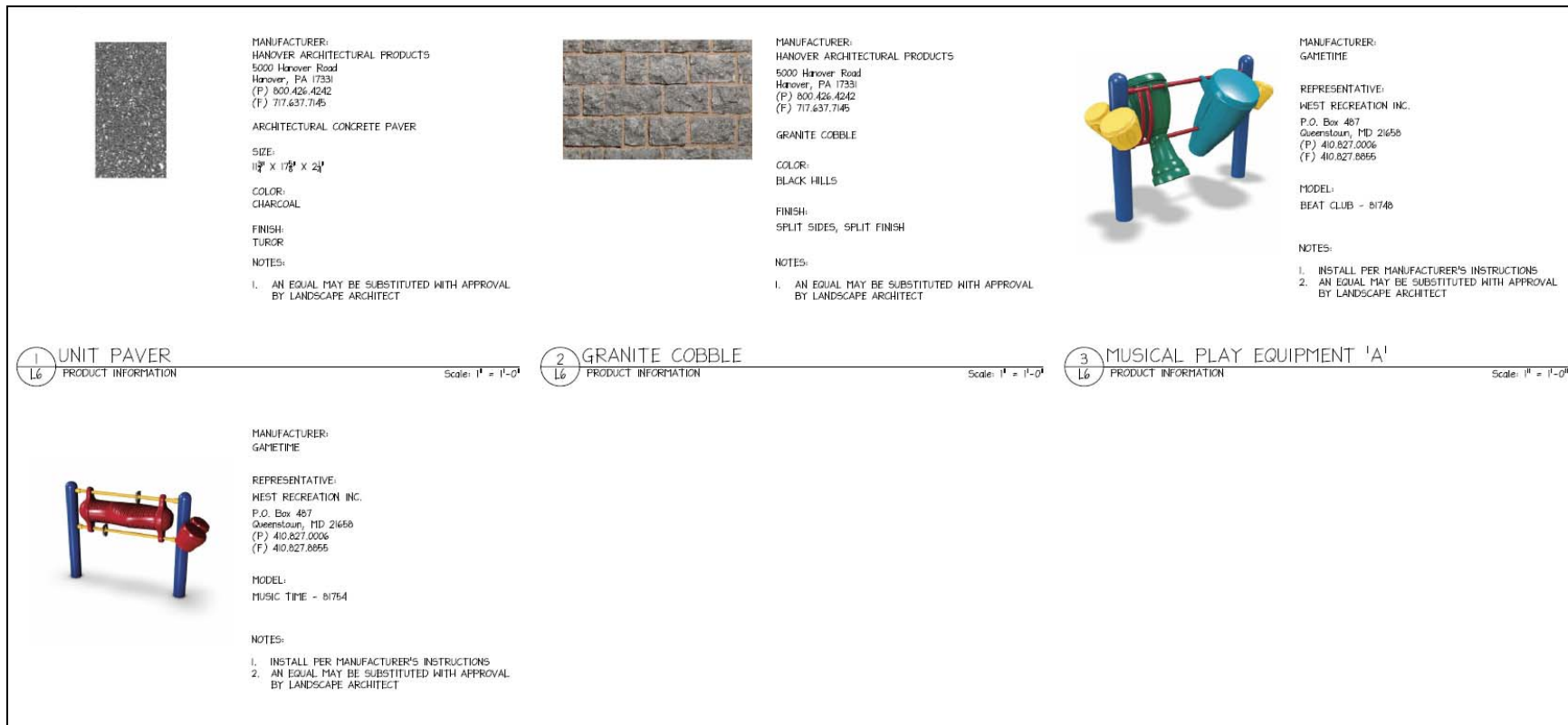


Figure 18. Pavers and play equipment.

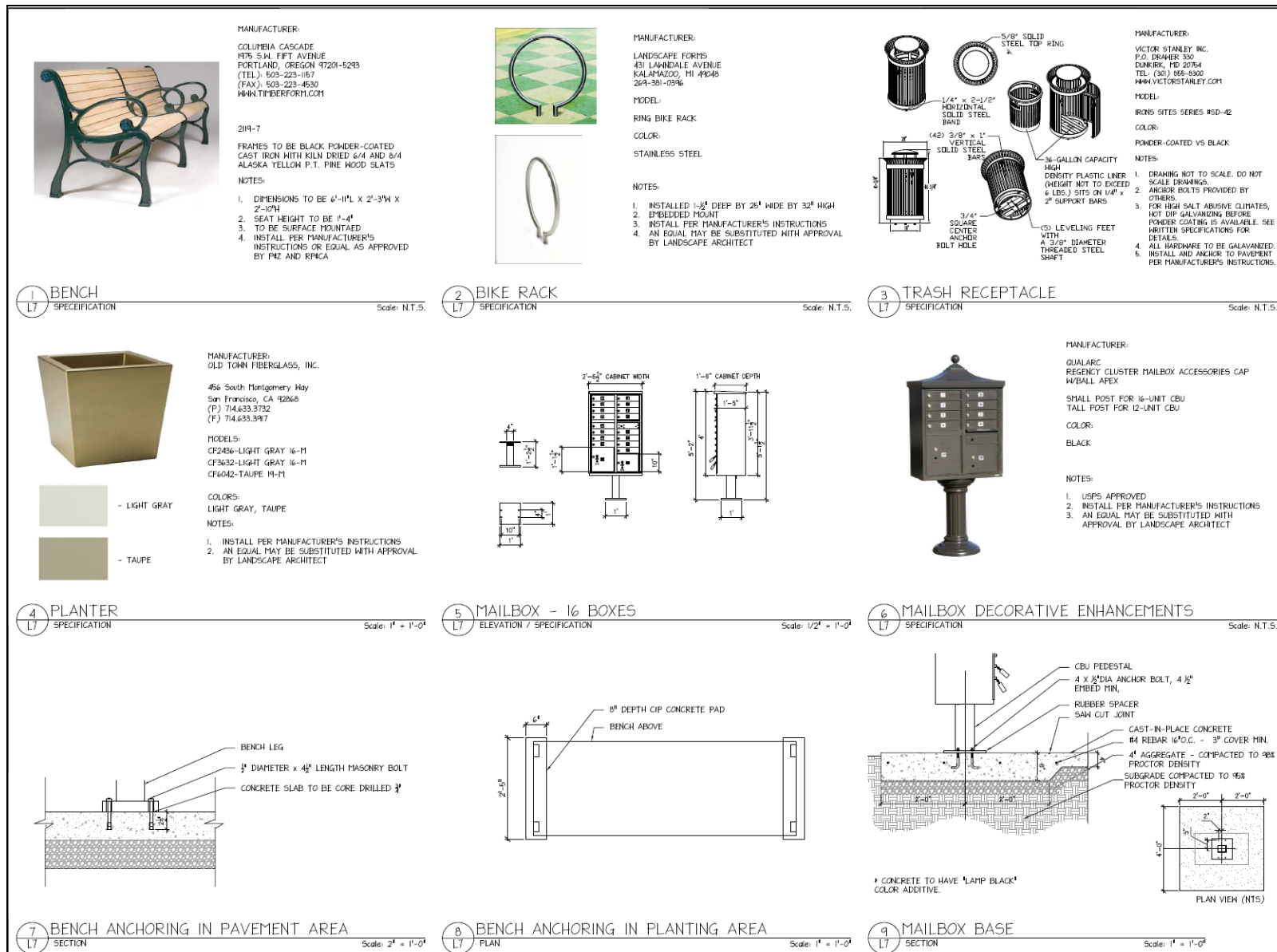


Figure 19. Site furniture.

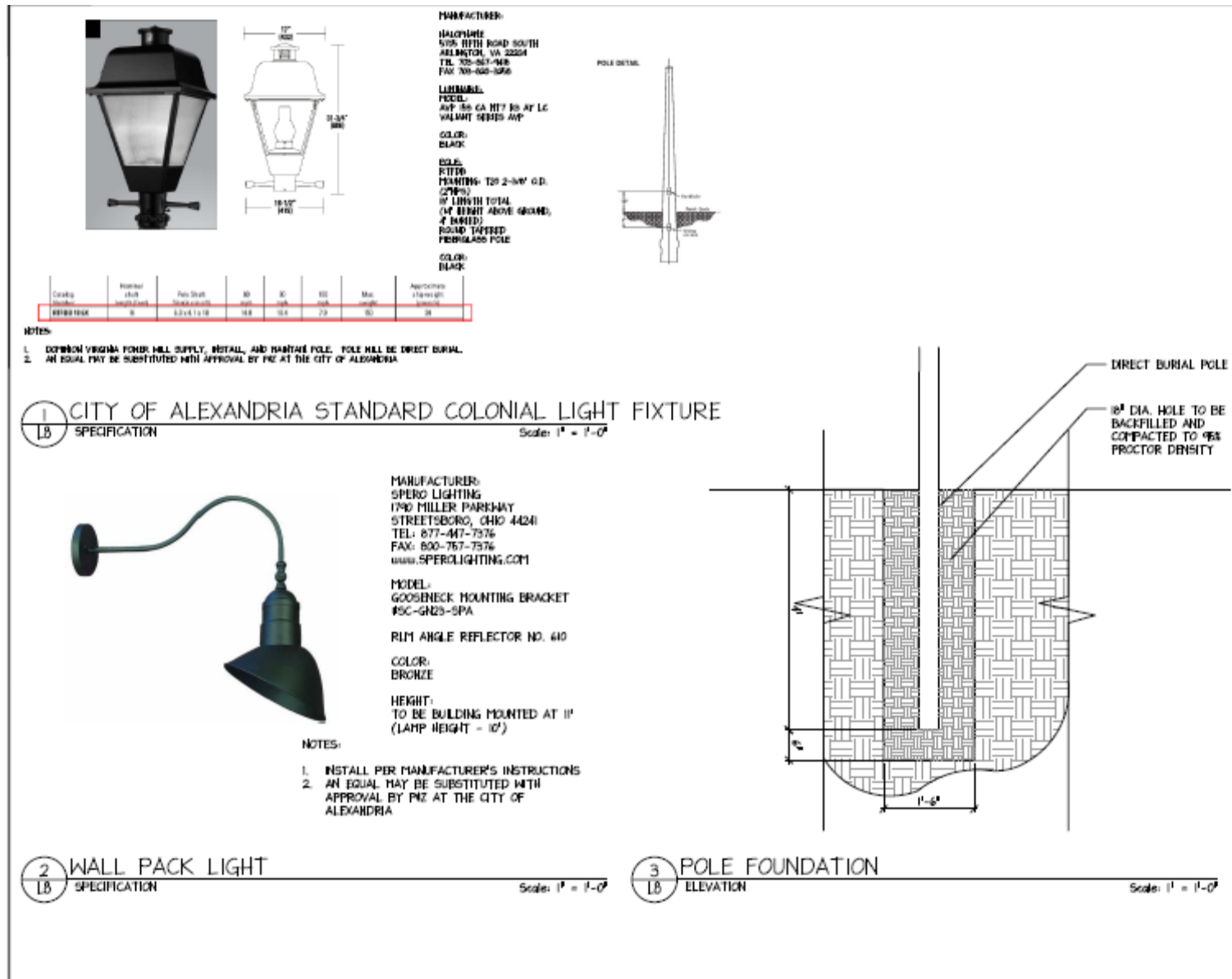


Figure 20. Lighting details.