

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2003

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER ⁵

SUBJECT: REPORT OF THE ALEXANDRIA HISTORICAL RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION COMMISSION

ISSUE: Receipt of the report of the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the report of the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission and thank the members for their efforts on behalf of the City.

DISCUSSION: This report covers the period from November 2001 through November 2003. This Commission was created by the Commonwealth of Virginia in partnership with the City of Alexandria to assist in preserving the historic character of our City. Two of the members of the Commission are appointed directly by the Governor; five are appointed by City Council. The Commission accepts easements on open space, and architecturally significant interior and exterior elements. An attachment to the report lists all of the properties in the City currently protected with easements.

The Commission has participated in preservation issues in three major program areas. The first of these is advocacy. Members of the Commission speak before the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Boards of Architectural Review, and the City Council, on appeals. This advocacy complements efforts in the easement program, by promoting and preserving the open space that is an integral part of the character of Alexandria's historic districts.

Since the Commission's last report, an outreach program has been initiated with the residents of Alexandria. The members of the Commission are taking opportunities to speak to neighborhood associations in order to inform members of these groups about preservation efforts and the ways in which communities can preserve their historic character.

The Easement Program is discussed in the second part of the Commission Report. Under its charter, the Commission accepts easements on open spaces, structures, facades, and/or interiors of properties throughout Alexandria. The Commission identified over fifty properties for which

open space easements would be most appropriate. Since the last report of the Commission, October 2001, the Commission has received an easement on the garden at 609 Oronoco Street, the property adjacent to the Lee Boyhood Home. Thus, the entire north side of the 600 block of Oronoco Street is now protected with open space easements. An easement on the exterior of Lloyd House was granted by the Commission to the Landmarks Commission of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The Commission has increased its efforts to include appropriate properties in other historic districts within the City in Del Ray and Rosemont. To encourage property owners to consider the benefits of easement to the City, the Commission joined with the Historic Alexandria Foundation in sponsoring a seminar on easements in February 2002. A seminar will be held again in 2004, with participation by the Northern Virginia Land Trust.

The last section of the report outlines the work done to complete the renovation of Lloyd House, which is owned by the Commission and now leased to the City for use by the Administration Division of the Office of Historic Alexandria. The Commission has been pleased with the work on Lloyd House and expresses its gratitude for the funding provided by the City. Other financial assistance was provided through grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia, through the work of our delegation to the General Assembly. Congressman James P. Moran provided assistance from the federal program, Save America's Treasures. The Commission is grateful for the support provided by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Activities for the maintenance of the garden. In a short while, work will begin on the development of a plan for the garden. The Commission will also be organizing a friends group to assist in the future needs for Lloyd House.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENT: Report of the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission

STAFF:

Jean Taylor Federico, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

**THE ALEXANDRIA HISTORICAL RESTORATION AND
PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Office of Historic Alexandria
Box 178, City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22313

**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL
Covering the Period
November 2001 - November 2003**

William D. Euille, Mayor
Redella S. Pepper, Vice Mayor
Ludwig P. Gaines, Councilman
Rob Krupicka, Councilman
Andrew H. Macdonald, Councilman
Paul C. Smedberg, Councilman
Joyce Woodson, Councilwoman
Philip Sunderland, City Manager

Advocacy

In addition to pursuing in the public arena policies and programs for the continued protection of the Lloyd House and promoting government/private partnerships in the easements program, the Commission has been heavily involved in advocating preservation interests in other contexts. One of these has been to take positions and testify in planning, zoning, and architectural review proceedings, especially when issues arise affecting the preservation of open space that has been a defining feature of the historic character of our Historic Districts. Another has been to address local civic associations and voters groups about the issues facing historic preservation efforts in Alexandria. Finally, since the last report, the Commission has wound down the major effort it made to participate in local and legal proceedings dealing with the planning of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement project.

Our advocacy before the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Board of Architectural Review, and the City Council, on appeals, complements our efforts in the easements program. Those efforts are directed at preserving the open space that is an integral part of the combination of architecture and layout that makes up the character of Alexandria's historic districts.

The position of the Commission is that the Historic District's character is much more than the simple sum of the architectural features imbedded in the structures themselves. Other important aspects include how these structures relate to each other and to the whole in terms of their spacing, their relative positions in the street- and block-scapes, their ages, their associated plantings, and their different uses. A critical criterion in this advocacy has been whether proposed property additions or modifications contribute to or detract from the residents' and visitors' sense of being transported into Alexandria's rich history.

A corollary in the Commission's advocacy on these issues is that focusing narrowly on the impact of a single proposal that may be pending is not sufficiently farsighted. In many cases, the precedent that is set may be equally, or even more, important to the ultimate impacts they may have. For example, the Commission continues to take a stand opposing large additions onto the main block of historic residences into prominent, long-standing side gardens. Open side gardens have been a significant defining feature of Alexandria. Where the Commission holds an easement on the property, we have been successful in maintaining the integrity of that space. However, where we do not hold an easement, that critical effort to resist increasing the density of construction and to maintain the open character of our historic areas requires active cooperation on the part of City Council and other Boards and Commissions in the City. Our efforts to preserve the openness characteristic of our historic areas should be viewed as a major complementary component of the City's current concern for open space within the City in general.

A new entry point has come about for the Commission to become involved in the proceedings of other boards and the City Council on matters dealing with historic preservation efforts. In a number of cases that have come before those bodies, the applicant, Board, or Council has

suggested that the applicant explore offering an easement on some portion of the property. These initiatives frequently involve issues that are not readily resolved. For example, the proponent of a project may offer an easement on some part of the property that would be partially demolished or encapsulated by the proposed work. The donor receives local and federal tax benefits from any such easement so proffered and accepted by the Commission, in addition to the permission to proceed with the structural modifications granted by the Board or Council. The Commission holds that it must weigh seriously whether there is a net public benefit in the form of a legitimate and positive preservation objective achieved from such an easement before indicating it may accept it.

Making Alexandria's rich history available authentically should be reason enough to spur on these preservation efforts, but we are also fully aware that preserving Alexandria's historic character has very important economic consequences for property values and tourism. Independent studies for the City and other jurisdictions support the contention that Alexandria's special historic character is a major underpinning for much economic activity in the City.

Since the Commission's last report, it has begun an "outreach" program to communicate directly with the residents of Alexandria. This is being done by the Chairman and members of the Commission by taking opportunities to speak at meetings of voter groups and neighborhood associations. Alexandria has five historic districts and many historic sites not included in those districts, each with its own special characteristics and problems. Because the Commission is concerned with historic preservation efforts and accepts historic easements on properties throughout the City, the Commission uses these outreach occasions for two purposes. First, the Commission wants to inform the members of these groups about preservation efforts at the national, state, and City levels; the issues involved for the communities trying to preserve their historic character; and the role that historic easements may play in their efforts. Second, the Commission is looking to obtain information about the concerns these groups and individuals have over preservation efforts in general, their successes, and their shortcomings. The Commission's intent is to be better informed to the end that it may contribute more constructively to preserving the important historic and cultural resources in Alexandria that warrant a stronger and more directed stewardship.

Easement Program

Under its charter, the Commission accepts easements on open spaces, structures, facades, and/or interiors of properties throughout Alexandria. Including those held by other authorized easement grantee organizations, there are now thirty-seven such easements. Approximately one-half of these is held wholly or in part by the Commission. Other easement grantees in Alexandria include the Virginia Board of Historic Resources, the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, the Historic Alexandria Foundation, and the L'Enfant Trust. A list of known easements in Old Town is attached to this report.

The Commission has identified over fifty properties for which we believe open space easements would be most appropriate. We are in the process of encouraging the owners of these properties to consider offering such easements. Open space, particularly that representative of the historic character of Old Town, is at a high and increasing premium. That type of easement is our highest priority.

Since our last report, easements have been granted on several important properties, most notably the matching property to the Robert E. Lee Boyhood Home. Thus, the entire north side of the 600 block of Oronoco Street is now covered by easements. The Lloyd House was the subject of a grant of easement given by the Commission to Landmarks Commission of the Commonwealth. The Commission's charter was amended in 2001 to extend the area from within which we are permitted to accept easements. Originally, the area was limited to the Old and Historic District, but the amendment increased that area to include the entire City. The Commission has increased its efforts to include appropriate properties in other historic districts within the City, in Del Ray and Rosemont and other individual properties of historic significance outside the two historic districts.

To encourage property owners to consider the benefits of these easements to the City and to themselves, the Commission joined with the Historic Alexandria Foundation in sponsoring a seminar on easements in February 2002. It covered various features of easements and the process that is followed to develop and record them, including property definition, appraisals, tax benefits, and the resale of property under easement. A similar program was held in 1998. The Office of Historic Alexandria provided support for the program. A model easement has been developed, as well as a step-by-step guide for homeowners who are interested in granting an easement.

The Commission is monitoring compliance with easements and has engaged in productive dialogues with several owners during the past year.

Lloyd House

The renovations at Lloyd House are now near completion. A reception for the Mayor and Members of City Council took place on Saturday, June 14, 2003. The Office of Historic Alexandria moved into the building in mid-August 2003. The Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission signed a lease with the City, granting use of the space for the next 20 years.

The Commission has been pleased with the restoration work on Lloyd House. In the past year, structural repairs have been completed. The Historic Structures Report found that the most significant and imminent threat in the building was the inadequate floor framing. The majority of these weaknesses were caused by structural changes made to the floor framing system in the mid-20th century. When the building became a dormitory for the Navy Women's Reserve (WAVES) during World War II, much of the wood framing was damaged with the installation of an extra staircase, plumbing and piping. Years later, when Lloyd House was leased to the Alexandria Public Library System, the enormous weight of the books and bookshelves further exacerbated the problem. The building did not meet current code requirements, necessitating reinforcing of the floors. At its most critical point, the floor was 2-5/8" from level on the northeast side of the building.

Temporary shoring for support was placed in the basement, pending installation of new steel columns and concrete footings to support the first floor. In the meantime, jacking on the first floor was accomplished to bring the second floor which was most severely damaged, back to level. The work was done at a rate of 1/16" to 1/4" a day using a system of scaffolds that were adjusted in height, room by room. Once the floors were level, or as close to level as possible without cracking the wall and ceiling plaster or damaging existing wood floors, tubular steel reinforcement beams were attached to the existing wood beams to prevent future sagging.

Additional tasks included installation of a fire suppression system and a voice-activated fire alarm system and provision of electrical upgrades, along with additional lighting, especially on the second floor. A new front door was installed, as well as an ADA-accessible toilet room on the first floor. Lead paint was abated throughout the building, a small kitchen was installed, and windows were repaired. Paint analysis was performed on key areas in order to determine the 1797 colors used in the interior of the building. The HVAC system was renovated and parts of it were replaced. The staircase from the first to the second floor required extensive reinforcing and tightening. Damaged areas of the floors were replaced.

During the course of the renovations, the City provided additional funding so that the lead paint abatement could be accomplished both by encapsulation as well as by removal. All exterior cornices were painted, the damaged limestone sills are being repaired, broken windowpanes were replaced, and the floors were refinished. New shutters were installed on the south side of the building. Projects scheduled but not yet completed include the installation of a new rear door, a security system, and a trench and drain system to help remove water from the roof which has been collecting in the basement. Special vinyl sunscreen was applied to the interior of all windows to decrease the effect of sunlight on objects inside Lloyd House.

Funding for all of these projects was provided by the City's Capital Improvement Project, through grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Historic Resources with assistance from our State Delegation, and from the federal program, Save America's Treasures, through the assistance of Congressman James P. Moran.

The Commission is especially pleased that the Office of Historic Alexandria's Administration Division is currently occupying Lloyd House. This is a fine and suitable occupant for the building. Plans are now underway for the use of Lloyd House for meetings, parties and receptions. In the long term, members of the Commission will work with staff in OHA and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to review conditions in the garden and prepare a long-range plan for future plantings. In the meantime, the Commission wishes to particularly recognize the support provided by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs in tending to the maintenance of the garden.

In the next several months the Commission will be working to set up a fundraising organization to assist in the future needs for Lloyd House, most especially conservation treatment of paintings and objects, as well as the purchase of other collections for the building.

Attachment

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles Trozzo', written in a cursive style.

Charles Trozzo, Chairman

Current Members:

Charles Ablard

Linda Boyle

Philip Brooks

Laura Byrd

Loti Dunn

Martha Feldkamp

Emily Springer

Past Members Who Served During the Reporting Period:

Polly Burke

Jeffery Epperson

Andrew Hackman

Historic Preservation Easements in Alexandria, Virginia

revised 12/1/03

Address	Original Donor	Date of Donation	Easement Holder	Type of Easement
Alfred St. S. 115 & 117	Hartsook, Elizabeth H.	9/23/99	AHRPC*	Open space
Cameron St. 211	Weinhagen, Robert & Dowling L. J.	12/19/96 12/22/98	AHRPC	Open space & exterior Interior
Cameron St. 607	Trone, Eugene, June, & Eugenie ("William Yeaton Home")	7/19/94	AHRPC	Open space, façade, & interior
Duke St. 208	MacManus, Elizabeth, Tr. et al ("Dr. Craik House")	5/12/91	Comm. Of Va. & Va Bd. of Historic Resources, & HAF**	Exterior & interior
Duke St. 516	Rodriguez, Karol K.	9/3/93	AHRPC	Open space
Fairfax St. S. 209	Fowler, Trudye H.	9/25/97	AHRPC	Open space & façade
Franklin St. 215A Jefferson St. 215	Laurent, Margaret F. G., Tr.	12/5/91	Va. Historic Landmarks Comm.	Easement in gross (both properties)
Franklin St. 207	Black, Hugo L. & Elizabeth S.	12/26/69	Comm. Of Va. & Va. Bd. Of Historic Resources	Easement in gross
King St. 1007	Montague, Robert L. "Montague Building"	12/12/01	AHRPC	Open space; façade & interior
Lee St. S. 218	Moore, Dayton & Celeste	6/10/92	AHRPC	Open space & facade
Lee St. S. 310	Wilbor, Jonathan & Peggy	12/24/92	AHRPC	Open space
Lee St. S. 401	Kegan, Lawrence, Tr.	2/21/91	AHRPC	Open space, façade & interior
Lee St. S. 418	Dunn, H. Stewart, Jr. & Loti	11/20/91	AHRPC & HAF	Open space & façade
Lee St. S. 420	MacDonald, William & Elizabeth	10/24/94	AHRPC	Open space & facade
Lee St. S. 428	Schumaier, C. Peter and Dee	12/21/83	The L'Enfant Trust	Open space and façade
Oronoco St. 601	Kington, Mark J. & Ann A. "Potts-Fitzhugh House"	12/8/00	AHRPC	Open space
Oronoco St. 609	Powell, Earl and Nancy	12/12/01	AHRPC	Open space
Pitt St. S. 229	Ablard, Charles D. & Doris M.	12/30/86	Va. Historic Landmarks Bd. & HAF	Easement in gross
Pitt St. S. 700 (moved from 109 Pitt)	Olson, Richard L. & Janice C.	4/13/65	Alex. Redevelopment and Housing Authority	Exterior

Prince St. 201	Northern Virginia Fine Arts Assn. "The Athenaeum"	5/9/90	AHRPC	Open space & facade
Prince St. 207	Moore, Gay Montague ("George William Fairfax House")	12/4/79	AHRPC & HAF	Easement in gross
Prince St. 413 Prince St. 415 Prince St. 415 1/2	Stahl, Howard H.	2/11/87	Va. Historic Landmarks Bd. & HAF	Easement in gross Exterior & certain interior Easement in gross
Prince St. 507	Cooper, Ronald & Carolyn	12/8/82	Va. Historic Landmarks Bd.	Exterior façade
Prince St. 711	Walker, Jo Ballantine "Fowle Pickens House"	6/3/87	The L'Enfant Trust	Easement in gross
Prince St. 811	Fensterwald, Bernard, Jr. and Patricia "Bayne Fowle House"	7/2/86	Va. Historic Landmarks Bd.	Exterior & first floor interior
Prince St. 1020	Thompson, Evelina, Tr.	12/14/89	Va. Historic Landmarks Bd. & HAF	Open space & façade
Queen St 518	Hovey, Richard B. & Bradley, A.J.	12/29/90	AHRPC	Open space
Queen St. 520 & 522	Saunders, Lelia B.	5/9/90	AHRPC	Open space
Queen St. 607	Clizbe, John and Rebecca	9/21/98	AHRPC	Rear wall of the ell
Royal St. S. 211	Gilman, J. Paul & Claire Heffernan	8/1/96	AHRPC	Interior
St. Asaph St. S. 223	Joynt, John Howard & Mary Aberdeer "Dulany House"	12/16/86	Va. Historic Landmarks Bd. & HAF	Exterior & first floor interior
St. Asaph St. S. 301	Arnold Frances L. "Lafayette House"	8/3/70	HAF	Exterior & interior woodwork
Wales Alley, 1	Watauga Properties L.L.C.	5/30/01	AHRPC	Interior wall
Washington St. N. 220	AHRPC "Lloyd House"	2/23/01	Va. Dept. of Historic Resources	Interior and exterior
Wolfe St. 604	HAF "Alexandria Academy"		Comm. Of Va. Bd. Of Historic Resources	Interior and exterior

Abbreviations:

*AHRPC--Alexandria Historical Research & Preservation Commission

**HAF--Historic Alexandria Foundation