

Docket Item #12  
DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2003-0016  
DUNCAN LIBRARY EXPANSION

Planning Commission Meeting  
September 4, 2003

**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request for a development special use permit, with site plan, and modifications, and a parking reduction, to expand the existing James M. Duncan Library.

**APPLICANT:** City of Alexandria  
Department of General Services

**LOCATION:** 2501 Commonwealth Avenue

**ZONE:** R-2-5/Residential

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**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, SEPTEMBER 4, 2003:** On a motion by Mr. Dunn, seconded by Mr. Robinson, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the development special use permit, with site plan, subject to all applicable codes and ordinances and the staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0.

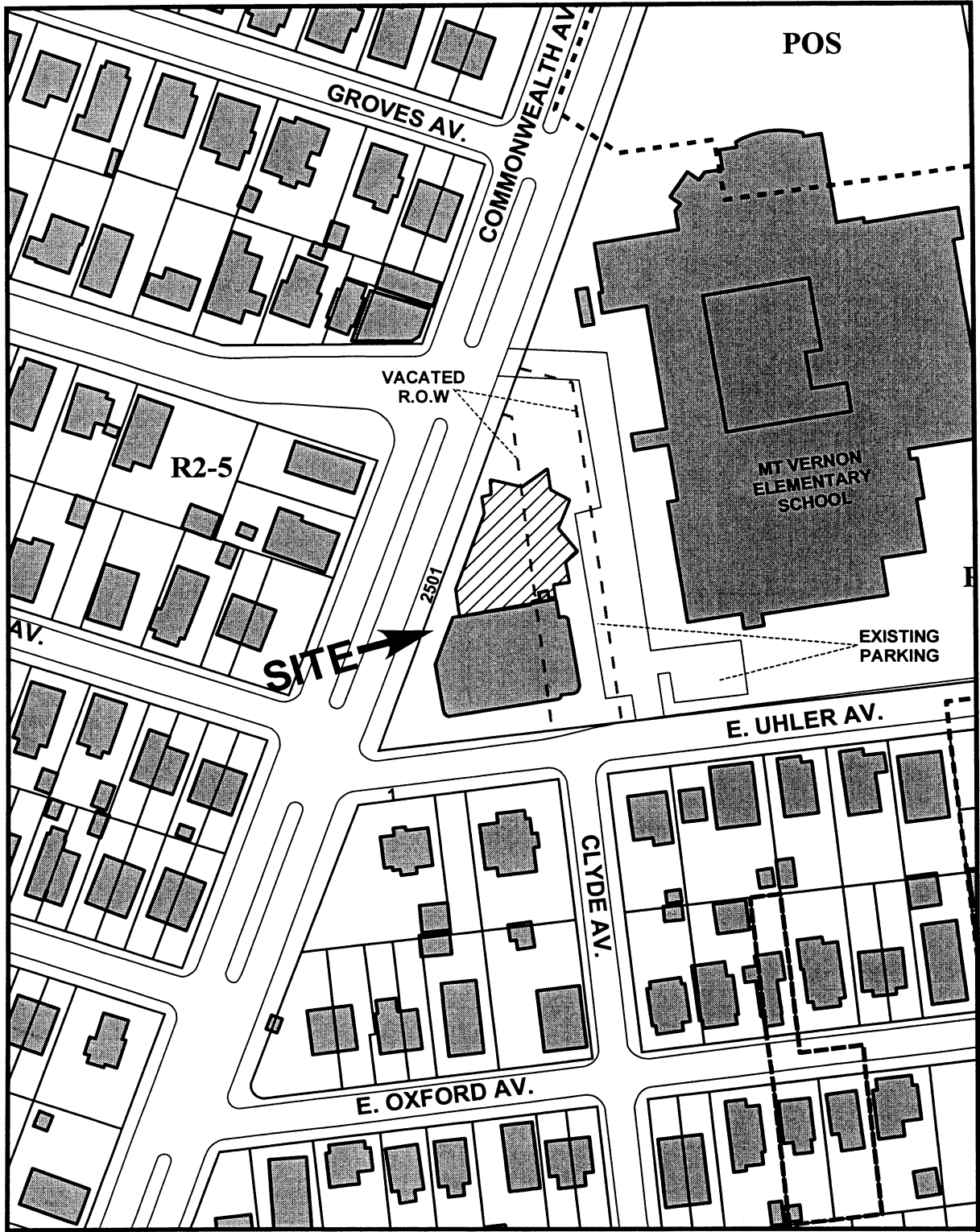
Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis and conditions.

Speakers:

David Fromm, Vice-President of the Del Ray Citizens Association, stated that he supports the design of the addition. He expressed concern about the budget for the construction of the addition, design of the bio-retention area and the retention of the tree on Commonwealth Avenue.

Amy Slack, representing Del Ray Land Use Committee, stated that the committee supports the proposed addition and referenced the letter of support dated September 2, 2003. The expansion of the library will be a valuable and much needed addition to the library and community. The committee supports the parking reduction, because the library is neighborhood serving, with many patrons traveling by foot. She expressed concern about the retention of the tree adjacent to the Commonwealth Avenue entrance and the future design of the bio-retention area on Commonwealth Avenue.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.



**DSUP #2003-0016**

**09/04/03**



**SUMMARY:**

Staff is recommending **approval** of the development special use permit to construct a 5,300 sq.ft. library addition to the existing 8,000 sq.ft. Duncan Library on Commonwealth Avenue, with conditions to address retention of the existing street trees on Commonwealth Avenue and the site, parking, design of the building, open space/plaza and the location of the stormwater detention and treatment facility, which can be addressed with the conditions outlined within the staff report. There have been meetings with the adjoining communities and residents, which have all expressed support of the proposed expansion to the library, which plays an important civic role within the community by serving as a focal point for community activities and functions.

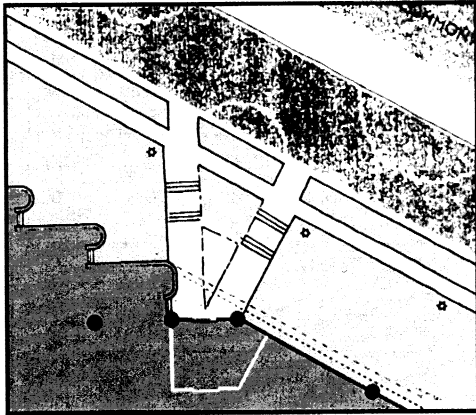
The modest height of the single-story, 5,300 ft. addition is compatible with the residential uses on Commonwealth Avenue, and is similar in height to the existing library and significantly less height than the existing school. The proposed addition incorporates masonry elements of the existing library, while consisting of more glass elements to provide additional daylight for the interior space of the addition. Staff supports the overall design approach for the proposed addition, with some relatively minor refinements to the materials, canopy and signage and ensuring use of brick as represented on the preliminary plans.

The proposed library addition will result in the loss of open space on the site and a large tree on the site, however, the plan retains all of the other remaining trees on the site, including the street trees. Several of the smaller trees will need to be relocated on the site. By addressing the remaining issues as outlined below, the proposed addition will enable an improved library space and resources for the patrons, and reinforce the library as a focal gathering area for the community. The remaining issues are discussed in more detail below.

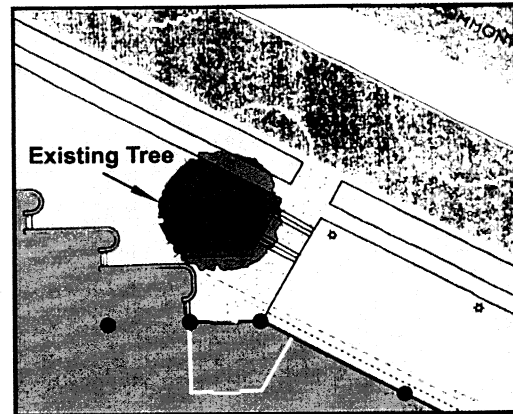
*Tree Preservation:*

An important component of integrating the proposed addition into this mature, primarily residential neighborhood and to retain the quality of the open space is to retain the many large trees on the site. While initially, it was proposed that several of the existing trees would be removed, the plan, plaza and entrance have been revised on the current plan to retain all but one of the existing trees. The retention of the large tree (14" caliper) on Commonwealth Avenue requires some modification of the size and shape of the front sidewalk entrance to retain the tree as depicted below. The revised entrance will have minimal impact on the functionality of the entrance, the entrance will continue to be visually prominent, provide for a library sign while also retaining the large street tree. Several of the existing trees around the proposed plaza will need to be relocated, which given the size of the trees (approximately 6" caliper), the city arborist believes can be safely transplanted.

*Current Site Plan:*



*Proposed By Staff:*



*Open Space/Plaza:*

One of the concerns raised by the schools was to maintain the visibility of the existing school entrance located along the western portion of the school building. This visibility has been accommodated by providing an open space area unobstructed by the proposed addition and a pedestrian plaza on the northern portion of the site.

However, to address this concern, included in the recommendation of approval is a condition to refine the design of the plaza, encourage seating areas and decorative materials. This will compliment the proposed library addition, school entrance, and the recently completed Captain Rocky Versace Memorial located adjacent to the Mount Vernon Avenue Recreation Center. As currently depicted on the site plan, a stormwater detention area is located between the front of the building and Commonwealth Avenue. There is a concern that the proposed depressed drainage area is not consistent with the character of the neighborhood or appropriate for the primary entrance to the library. To address this concern, staff recommends several conditions designed to improve the appearance of the area and lessen its impact on the streetscape. Staff recommends that the bio-retention filter area be revised so its appearance more closely resembles the existing, natural grade of the property, and may involve minor revisions to the building elevations such as an exposed foundation. In addition, staff is recommending that the landscaping materials within the bio-retention area primarily be turf, and decorative trees and plantings. These conditions are designed to create a more traditional front lawn area on Commonwealth Avenue, which functions as a primary entrance for the library, and enable the detention area to be incorporated into the design and landscaping of the plaza.

Parking:

The applicant is requesting a parking reduction of the 27 on-site spaces that are required for the new addition. All of the proposed parking for the library is located on the adjoining Mt. Vernon Elementary School or on the adjoining public streets (Mt. Vernon Avenue, Commonwealth and Uhler Avenues) The parking study indicates that because of the differing hours of peak usage for the school (morning and afternoons) and the library (later afternoon and evening) there is an opportunity for shared use of the 24 spaces on the school site after school hours and that there is a significant amount of available parking within reasonable walking distance. The summary of the parking data include the following:

- Within a reasonable walking distance (1,000 ft radius), there are 257 on-street parking spaces available. The majority of these on-street parking spaces are unrestricted.
- There is an opportunity for shared parking with the schools and the library, after school hours for the 23 spaces that are located on the school site.
- The 9 spaces on the adjoining school property are designated for library use all day.
- By restriping the existing parking area, one additional space can be provided adjacent to the library.
- The proposed addition will accommodate the existing library functions without an intensification of the existing use and therefore will not create a significant increase in the demand for parking.
- Depending on the location, the percentage of available parking spaces during the morning (10:00) ranges from 10 % to 38 % on the weekday to between 46 % to 95 % on the weekend. Again, depending on the location of the spaces, the percentage of spaces available during the afternoon (1:00 to 4:00 pm) ranges from 5 % to 63 % during the week and from 11 % to 89 % on the weekend. The percentage of spaces available in the evening ranges from 38 % to 64 % during the week and from 56 % to 95 % on the weekend.
- 46 percent of library patrons drive to the library, 32 % walk, 19 % do some combination of walking and driving, and 2 % take the bus or bicycle.

As with any parking requirement, there is a balance between the needs of the facility, and minimizing the loss of open space and impact on the adjoining neighborhoods. In this case because of the shared parking agreement between the schools and the library, and the significant amount of on-street parking that is available, staff supports the proposed parking reduction.

Building Design:

A significant portion of the proposed addition will be visible from Commonwealth Avenue. The proposed rectangular addition, is parallel to the street, with pedestrian entrances on Commonwealth Avenue and from the internal parking lot to the east of the library.

DSUP #2003-0016  
Duncan Library Expansion

The proposed building has been designed to relate to the existing building, to emphasize openness and a positive relationship to the streetscape and surrounding neighborhood; and to offer a dignified, high-quality project that better serves the library functions and the community. The solution extends some of the brick masonry elements of the existing building to create a new pavilion to the north containing a central reading room and collections. Unlike the existing building, the proposed reading room is filled with natural light--through perimeter walls by large bays and a sculptural roof which admits indirect light through clerestory windows.

The design, orientation and scale of the proposed addition generally provide a building style and scale that are compatible with the existing fabric of the neighborhood. The addition and site improvements will result in an enhanced library for the City, tree preservation and retention of a significant amount of open space for the site. The remaining issues are addressed by recommendations in the staff report and are discussed further in the staff analysis.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. The final design for the addition shall be consistent in architectural style and character and material quality as depicted on the preliminary architectural elevations dated July 30, 2003, and also provide additional refinements to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning that shall include:
  - a. The brick for the addition shall match the existing building.
  - b. Staff shall review the colors for the glass and metal frame and panel system; the glass shall be non-reflective and non-tinted.
  - c. A high quality entrance canopy shall be provided.
  - d. Design and location of signage shall be to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning.
  - d. The HVAC units and mechanical appurtenances shall be located on the roof-tops, recessed and screened from view from the public streets. Details on the screening methods shall be indicated on the final site plan.
  - e. Color elevations shall be submitted with the final site plan.
  - f. All refinements to the design and materials shall be revised prior to the release of the final site plan.
  - g. Architectural elevations (front, side and rear) shall be submitted with the final site plan. Each elevation shall indicate the average finished grade line. (P&Z)
2. A minimum of 9 spaces shall be reserved for the library use for the parking on the school property to the east of the library building. (P&Z)
3. The sidewalk for the building entrance on Commonwealth Avenue shall be redesigned as generally depicted in *Attachment No. 1* to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and RP&CA, to retain the existing 14" caliper tree on Commonwealth Avenue and to incorporate the sign. The tree shall be limbed if necessary to the satisfaction of the city arborist. (P&Z) (RP&CA)
4. A final landscape plan shall be provided with the final site plan to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and RP&CA. The plan shall include the level of landscaping depicted on the preliminary landscape plan and shall also provide:
  - a. The two proposed street trees on Commonwealth shall be located within the landscape strip between the sidewalk and the curb.
  - b. The existing 14" caliper tree proposed to be removed shall be retained.
  - c. The tree protection shall encircle the trees along Commonwealth Avenue as a group, not as individual trees.

- d. The limits of disturbance shall be adjusted in the parking lot area.
  - e. No storage area shall be provided outside the limits of disturbance. No storage area shall be provided inside the tree protection area.
  - f. Provide crown coverage breakdown which denotes street trees under a separate tabulation.
  - g. A reduction in the sidewalk width at the street entrance to the plaza/school in order to retain the existing 22" Sophora.
  - h. The materials and design of the plaza shall consist of seating and landscaping to encourage its use and serve as an entrance element to the school.
  - i. All landscaping shall be maintained in good condition and replaced as needed. All plant specifications shall be in accordance with the current and most up to date edition of the American Standard For Nursery Stock (ANSI Z60.1) as produced by the American Association for Nurserymen; Washington, D.C.
  - j. All work shall be performed in accordance with Landscape Specifications Guidelines 4th Edition as produced by the Landscape Contractors Association (LCA) of Maryland, District of Columbia and Virginia; Gaithersburg, Maryland.
  - k. Utility lines such as water, storm sewer and electric lines shall be located to minimize impacts on proposed street trees and open space.
  - l. The location of all light poles shall be coordinated with the street trees.
  - m. As trees mature they are to be limbed up to a minimum 6 feet. Trees are not to be planted under or near light poles.
  - n. The maximum height for the shrubs is 36 inches.
  - o. All landscaping shall be maintained in good condition and replaced as needed. (RP&CA) (P&Z)
5. Provide additional information about proposed plantings and existing street trees in the vicinity of the proposed retention filter area. No disturbance within the tree protection area for the existing trees will be permitted. Provide tree protection around all existing trees designated to remain, to include as much of the existing canopy as possible. (P&Z) (RP&CA)
6. The following revisions at a minimum shall be made to the bio-retention area adjacent to Commonwealth Avenue to the satisfaction of the Directors of Planning and Zoning, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs, and Transportation and Environmental Services:
- a. The bio-retention area shall be designed to appear to be similar in grade to the natural grade of the area. This may involve minor revisions to the building elevations such as an exposed foundation
  - b. The materials of the bio-retention area shall primarily be turf, decorative plantings and decorative trees. P&Z)



7. The applicant shall submit a phasing plan for construction of the addition that minimizes the closure of the library and designates the location of construction employee parking to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning. (P&Z)
8. All utility structures (except fire hydrants) shall be located out of view of public property and rights-of-ways and shall be screened to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning. (P&Z)
9. The applicant shall submit a plat of consolidation of the vacated right-of-way formerly known as Clyde Avenue with the adjacent property on which the library is located prior to the release of the final site plan. (P&Z)
10. The requested parking reduction is subject to a perpetual agreement between the Schools and the Library that formalizes their existing shared parking arrangement and the restriping of the five existing parking spaces to include a sixth space in the parking area immediately adjacent to the school building to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning. (P&Z)
11. At a minimum the applicant shall provide the parking spaces depicted on the preliminary plan and the spaces dedicated for library use shall be designated as library patron spaces to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning & Zoning. (P&Z)
12. The concrete sidewalks shall continue over the curb cuts on Mount Vernon Avenue to provide an uninterrupted sidewalk. All sidewalks within the site shall be connected to the public sidewalks to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T&ES. (P&Z)
13. A maximum of one freestanding monument sign other than traffic/directional signs shall be permitted and the size and design of the sign shall comply with the zoning ordinance and design guidelines. (P&Z)
14. Fencing shall not be permitted adjacent to Commonwealth Avenue. (P&Z)
15. Temporary construction trailer(s) shall be permitted and be subject to the approval of the Director of P&Z. The trailer(s) shall be removed prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy permit for the proposed addition. (P&Z)
16. The limits of disturbance shall remain as represented on the preliminary plans to the satisfaction of the Directors of Planning and Zoning, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, and Transportation and Environmental Services. (P&Z)(RP&CA)(T&ES)

DSUP #2003-0016  
Duncan Library Expansion

17. Any inconsistencies between the various drawings submitted by the applicant shall be reconciled to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T&ES. (P&Z)
18. The applicant shall be allowed to make minor adjustments to the building locations if the changes do not result in the loss of parking, open space or an increase in building height or floor area ratio. (P&Z)
19. The applicant shall attach a copy of the final released site plan to each building permit document application and be responsible for insuring that the building permit drawings are consistent and in compliance with the final released site plan prior to review and approval of the building permit by the Departments of Planning and Zoning and Transportation and Environmental Services. (P&Z)
20. The applicant shall prepare and submit a plan that delineates a detailed phasing plan and construction management plan for the entire project for review and approval by the Directors of P&Z, T&ES and Code Enforcement prior to the release the first final site plan for the project. (P&Z)
21. A temporary informational sign shall be installed on the site prior to the approval of the final site plan for the project and shall be displayed until construction is complete incorporating the required information; the sign shall notify the public of the nature of the upcoming project and shall provide a phone number for public questions regarding the project. Before commencing any clearing or grading of the site, the applicant shall hold a meeting with all adjoining property owners to review the, location of construction worker parking, plan for temporary pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and hours and overall schedule for construction. The Departments of P&Z and T&ES shall be notified of the date of the meeting before the permit is issued. (P&Z)
22. The applicant shall identify a person who will serve as liaison to the community throughout the duration of construction. The name and telephone number of this individual shall be provided in writing to residents, property managers and business owners whose property abuts the site, and to the Directors of P&Z and T&ES. (P&Z)(T&ES)
23. Prior to approval of site plan, show load plane of proposed building and foundation for impact on existing 12" sanitary sewer to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES. (T&ES)
24. The site is in the Four Mile Run watershed. Provide calculations to show the 100-year pre- and post-development discharge. (T&ES)

25. Show existing and proposed street lights and site lights. Indicate the type of fixture, and how mounting height, and strength of fixture in Lumens or Watts. Provide manufacturer's specifications for the fixtures. Provide lighting calculations to verify that lighting meets City Standards. (T&ES)
26. The applicant is advised that all stormwater designs that require analysis of pressure hydraulic systems and/or inclusion and design of flow control structures must be sealed by a professional engineer, registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia. If applicable, the Director of T&ES may require resubmission of all plans that do not meet this standard. (T&ES)
27. Plan must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES that adequate stormwater outfall is available to the site or else developer is to design and build any on or off site improvements to discharge to an adequate outfall. (T&ES)
28. All sidewalks in public right-of-way or abutting public right-of-way shall meet City standards. (T&ES)
29. Show all existing and proposed easements, both public and private, if any. (T&ES)
30. Replace existing curb and gutter, sidewalks, and handicap ramps that are in disrepair or broken. (T&ES)
31. Prior to the release of the final site plan, provide a Traffic Control Plan for construction detailing proposed controls to traffic movement, lane closures, construction entrances, haul routes, and storage and staging. (T&ES)
32. All Traffic Control Device design plans, Work Zone Traffic Control plans, and Traffic Studies shall be sealed by a professional engineer, registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia. (T&ES)
33. Provide proposed elevations (contours and spot shots) in sufficient details on grading plan to clearly show the drainage patterns. (T&ES)
34. The stormwater collection system is part of the Four Mile Run watershed. All on-site stormwater curb inlets and public curb inlets within 50 feet of the property line shall be duly marked to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services.(T&ES)

35. The stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) required for this project shall be constructed and installed under the direct supervision of the design engineer or his designated representative. The design engineer shall make a written certification to the City that the BMP(s) are constructed and installed as designed and in accordance with the approved Final Site Plan.(T&ES)
36. The surface appurtenances associated with the on-site structural BMPs shall be marked to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services to identify them as part of the structural BMP system.(T&ES)
37. For any surface-installed Best Management Practices, i.e. Bio-Retention Filters, Vegetated Swales, etc. are employed for this site, descriptive signage for the BMPs is required to be installed to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services.(T&ES)
38. The Developer shall furnish the owners with an Operation and Maintenance Manual for all Best Management Practices (BMPs) on the project. The manual shall include an explanation of the functions and operations of each BMP and any supporting utilities, catalog cuts on any mechanical or electrical equipment, a schedule of routine maintenance for the BMP(s) and supporting equipment, and a copy of the maintenance agreement with the City.(T&ES)
39. During the construction phase of this development, the site developer, its contractor, certified land disturber, or owner's other agents shall implement waste and refuse control program. This program shall control wastes such as discarded building materials, concrete truck washout, chemicals, litter or trash, trash generated by construction workers or mobile food vendor businesses serving them and sanitary waste at the construction site and prevent its off site migration that may cause adverse impacts to the neighboring properties or the environment to the satisfaction of Directors of Transportation and Environmental Services and Code Enforcement. All wastes shall be disposed off site properly in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local laws.(T&ES)
40. The applicant must demonstrate the ability of the proposed water quality BMPs to treat the water quality volume.(T&ES)
41. Tree protection during construction must be located at the drip line of the specific tree(s) to be saved.(T&ES) (RP&CA)

42. The location of proposed landscaping must not interfere with the intended use of proposed water quality BMPs nor should future maintenance of the BMP impact the health of the landscaping. Certification of the long term health of the trees in coordination with the long term maintenance of the BMPs must be presented to the satisfaction of the Directors of Transportation and Environmental Services, Planning and Zoning, and Recreation Parks and Cultural Activities.(T&ES)
43. The increased square footage area requires the building shall be equipped with an automatic sprinkler system. Condition met, full sprinkler system noted on site plan. (Code Enforcement)
44. The developer shall provide a building code analysis with the following building code data on the plan: a) use group; b) number of stories; c) type of construction; d) floor area per floor; e) fire protection plan. Condition acknowledged as General Note on plans. Submitted on Sheet 6. (Code Enforcement)
45. A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.(Code Enforcement)
46. Prior to submission of the Final Site Plan, the developer shall provide a fire flow analysis by a certified licensed fire protection engineer to assure adequate water supply for the structure being considered. (Code Enforcement)
47. Required exits, parking, and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11. Handicapped accessible bathrooms shall also be provided Acknowledged by applicant and shown as General Note on plans. Submitted plans to not show handicap accessible curbing by designated handicap parking. (Code Enforcement)

**Special use permits and modifications requested by the applicant and recommended by staff:**

1. Special use permit to expand the existing public library within the R-2-5 zone.
2. Special use permit for an off-street parking reduction.
3. Modification of the required front yard setback along Commonwealth Avenue and the side yard setback adjacent to the internal parking area and the school.

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Staff Note: In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.

**BACKGROUND:**

The applicant, Alexandria Department of General Services, requests approval of a development special use permit, with site plan, and modifications, with a parking reduction to renovate and expand the existing James M. Duncan Library located at 2501 Commonwealth Avenue. The proposed addition also requires a front yard setback modification of the required 25 feet setback to provide a front setback consistent with the existing library and a side yard modification of the required 25 feet to accommodate reading alcoves within the proposed addition. A parking reduction is required to provide no additional off-street parking spaces where a minimum of 27 spaces are required for the proposed addition.

The subject property consists of two separate parcels with a total area of 35,082 sq.ft: a single parcel and vacated right-of-way, formerly known as Clyde Avenue, that has never been consolidated. As part of the approval staff is recommending that these parcels be consolidated.

The subject property is zoned R-2-5, single and two-family residential, and is developed with the James M. Duncan Library. The area to the north of the site is zoned POS, public open space and community recreation zone and is developed with the Mt. Vernon Elementary School and Recreation Center. South and east of the site is zoned R-2-5 and is developed with residential dwellings. Library uses are permitted in the R-2-5 residential zone with a special use permit. The subject property is located in the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the use of the property for low density residential zones which allows neighborhood-serving, non-commercial facilities customarily found in residential neighborhoods.

In 1968, a special use permit was approved to construct the existing 8,000 sq. ft. public library, at that time it was anticipated that an addition to the library would be constructed in the future and depicts the location of the addition to the north of the existing library building (SUP #753). There have been no significant modifications to the library since its construction in 1969.

Duncan Library is one of four library facilities dispersed relatively evenly throughout the City. The others are Charles E. Beatley, Jr., the central, largest facility, located on Duke Street and completed in 2001; and two other branch libraries: Kate Waller Barrett, the oldest library in the system constructed in 1938 and renovated in 1995, located on Queen Street; and Ellen Coolidge Burke, located on Seminary Road, which was renovated in 2002 and recently reopened. The service area for Duncan Library covers the northeast quadrant of the City, bounded by the Route One corridor to the east, King Street to the south, Quaker Lane to the west, and the Alexandria/Arlington boundary at Four Mile Run to the north.

### **Feasibility Study for Expansion of Duncan Library**

During 2002, a steering committee comprised of various City departments, Library Administration, and the Alexandria City Public Schools participated in a feasibility study to consider the functions of the existing library and to explore opportunities to expand the existing library building. The study found that the library currently has a high level of utilization, with approximately 550 patron visits per day, and a total of 166,263 patron visits during fiscal year 2002. It was also determined that the original library was designed to accommodate 45,000 volumes, and that over the years, the collection has grown to 75,000 items, stacked on densely packed shelves in many sections of the library, with limited reading areas. In addition, patron and library staff circulation within the library is overly constricted due to the space limitations.

The steering committee developed three separate concepts for library expansion:

- Concept A: a single new level built adjacent to the existing library, consisting of approximately 5,500 sq. ft;
- Concept B: two new levels built adjacent to the existing library, consisting of approximately 4,800 sq. ft and;
- Concept C: one new level built above the existing library building, consisting of approximately 3,500 sq. ft.

During the steering committee process, staff indicated that there were three primary issues of concern with the proposed expansion of the library: 1) building and massing of the new addition; 2) open space and tree preservation and; 3) parking. The alternatives ranged from 3,500 to 5,500 sq.ft. The committee analyzed these concepts with regard to their respective functionality, affordability, constructability, impact on the public realm, access and aesthetics. With regard to these factors, the group determined that the Concept A, construction of a single story addition adjacent to the existing building, best met the goals established by the steering committee.

The feasibility study was presented to City Council in March 2003 during a Council workshop on budget related issues. While Council made no formal endorsement of any concept, they were advised that Concept A was the most affordable and feasible, as determined by the steering committee.

While Concept A does result in the loss of open space and one large tree on the site, staff supports this approach because the single-story addition provides a scale that is compatible with the adjoining residential neighborhood, retains the remaining trees on the site, and meets the needs of the library.

Throughout the process, the steering committee met with local civic and other groups to discuss the feasibility study and obtain feedback. A questionnaire was distributed and responses were collected at the library and at various civic association meetings. The questionnaire sought to obtain respondents' perspectives on their use of the library, library services they would like to see added or expanded, the library building itself, the open space immediately adjacent to the building, and information about how and when people frequent the library. A total of 234 completed questionnaires were received. In addition, community meetings were held to provide information about the preferred design and the public process to obtain approval of the library expansion.

**Proposed Development:**

The proposed addition adds 5,300 sq. ft. to the existing 8,000 sq.ft. library, that will enable the library to satisfy the programmatic requirements of the library. The existing building will remain and will be selectively renovated. The addition will be on the western portion of the library. Internal access will be provided between the existing library and the addition, on the Commonwealth Avenue facade and the eastern facade adjacent to the existing parking. The proposed addition will accommodate the adult collection, a reading room, a periodicals area, and an information desk, as well as a new entrance to the library along Commonwealth Avenue.

With the proposed addition, the library will consist of a total of 13,130 sq. ft. A new plaza is also proposed to the northern portion of the addition to provide a more clearly defined entrance to school from Commonwealth Avenue and better define the open space and landscaping.

The applicant expects to continue to serve approximately 500-600 patrons per day. The library will continue to operate during its current hours of operation: 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and closed on Sundays. Eight staff people will operate the library. According to the applicant, the duration of the construction of the addition will likely range from 6 to 9 months; of that time, it is anticipated that the library will be closed for 4 to 6 months. Deliveries are expected to be received in the loading area located to the south of the existing building along East Uhler Avenue during the library's regular operating hours. Trash will continue to be stored in three to four containers within a brick enclosure located immediately adjacent to the loading area.

Based on a building addition of 5,300 sq. ft., 27 off-street parking spaces are required. There is one existing off-street parking space and one loading space located on the subject property. An additional 22 existing off-street parking spaces available for use by library patrons are located off-site, on the Mt. Vernon Elementary School property.



| <b>JAMES M. DUNCAN LIBRARY EXPANSION</b> |   |                    |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Property Address:                        | 2501 Commonwealth Avenue                |                    |
| Total Site Area:                         | 35,082 square feet                      |                    |
| Zone:                                    | R-2-5/Single and Two Family Residential |                    |
| Current Use:                             | Public Library                          |                    |
| Proposed Use:                            | Public Library                          |                    |
|  | <u>Permitted/Required</u>               | <u>Proposed</u>    |
| Floor Area                               | 15,787 square feet                      | 13,165 square feet |
| FAR                                      | .45                                     | .38                |
| Yards (Front)                            | 25 feet                                 | 21.5 feet *        |
| (Side)                                   | 25 feet                                 | 7.58 feet*         |
| Height                                   | 35 feet                                 | 19.5 feet          |
| Open Space                               | none                                    | none               |
| Parking                                  | 27                                      | 10                 |
| *Modification requested                  |   |                    |

**STAFF ANALYSIS:**

Staff supports the proposed expansion of the library and the associated parking reduction to enable the library to provide a 5,300 sq.ft. addition to the existing 8,000 sq.ft. library on Commonwealth Avenue, with conditions to address retention of the existing street trees on Commonwealth and the site, parking, design of the building, open space/plaza and the location of the stormwater detention and treatment facility, which can be addressed with the conditions outlined within the staff report.

The modest height of the single-story building (19.5 ft.) addition is compatible with the residential uses on Commonwealth Avenue, and is a similar in height to the existing library and significantly less height than the existing school. The proposed addition incorporates masonry elements of the existing library, while consisting of more glass elements to provide additional daylight for the interior space of the addition.

The proposed library addition will result in the loss of open space on the site and a large tree on the site, however, the plan does retain the remaining trees on the site, including the street trees although several of the smaller trees will need to be relocated. By addressing the remaining issues as outlined below, the proposed addition will enable an improved library space and resources for the patrons, and reinforce the library as a focal gathering area for the community. The remaining issues are discussed in more detail below.

**Parking:**

Library usage fluctuates during the day, with low usage during the mornings, moderate in the afternoons and more intense in the later afternoon and evenings. Responses to the questionnaire indicate that 50 % of respondents visit the library during weekdays. Another 30 % responded that they visit the library on no specific day of the week. Twelve percent of the respondents indicated that they visit the library on the weekend. School usage, however, is consistent during the school days, with school bus, automobile and pedestrian traffic heaviest during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times. Because of the discontinuity of peak use between the school and library, the applicant states that an increase in efficiency in the utilization of the existing parking occurs which reduces the impact of any incremental increase in use of the library that may occur in the future.

Within a moderate walking distance of the library (1,000 ft. radius), there are approximately 257 on-street and off-street parking spaces available. The majority of these on-street parking spaces are unrestricted, except for the north side of East Uhler Avenue where no parking is permitted except for pick-up and drop-off activities in the early morning and mid-afternoon hours. Unrestricted parking is permitted on the south side of East Uhler Avenue from Clyde Avenue to the intersection of East Uhler and Commonwealth Avenues.

The applicant is requesting special use permit approval for a reduction of the required 27 off-street parking spaces. The library contends that the proposed addition will not be an intensification of the existing use but rather will accommodate the current book collection, provide reading areas and provide an additional area for the existing library staff, therefore the proposed addition will not generate additional parking demand. Staff agrees that the proposed addition will likely not generate a significant amount of additional parking demand because new services or programs are not being offered. However, because of the renovation, staff believes there will likely be some increase in usage of the library. Given the available on-street parking in the vicinity of the site on Commonwealth Avenue, Mount Vernon Avenue, Uhler Avenue, and at the Mount Vernon School, this existing parking should be sufficient to accommodate the demand for parking spaces generated by some increase in the usage of the library during the late afternoon and evening hours.

DSUP #2003-0016  
Duncan Library Expansion

There are a total of 23 off-street parking spaces in this location, one space located on the library property, 17 spaces located immediately adjacent to the library building, and 5 existing spaces located further east of the library, adjacent to the school building and perpendicular to East Uhler Avenue. By restriping the 5 spaces adjacent to the school, 1 additional space can be provided.

Of the 17 spaces located immediately adjacent to the library building, 9 spaces are available for use by library patrons all day. The remaining 8 spaces are available for use by library patrons after school hours. The 5 additional spaces located in a separate parking area adjacent to the school are available for use by library patrons after school hours. The shared use of these spaces has long been understood by both the library and the school. As part of this process, staff has asked the applicant to work with both groups to formalize the arrangement to ensure its continuation in perpetuity.

The applicant surveyed these spaces and found that the number of available parking spaces in this area fluctuated between a low of only 5 % on East Uhler Avenue during weekday afternoons, to a high of 95 % availability on Saturday mornings for those spaces located on the school property to the east of the library.

The following chart depicts the availability of parking as surveyed by the applicant:

| Location          | # Spaces | Weekday  |         |         |         | Saturday |         |         |         |
|-------------------|----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
|                   |          | 10:00 am | 1:00 pm | 4:00 pm | 7:00 pm | 10:00 am | 1:00 pm | 4:00 pm | 7:00 pm |
| Duncan Library    | 9        | 38%      | 40%     | 24%     | 40%     | 67%      | 11%     | 33%     | 67%     |
| Commonwealth Ave. | 110      | 48%      | 48%     | 36%     | 38%     | 73%      | 71%     | 65%     | 68%     |
| Mt. Vernon Ave.   | 100      | 61%      | 63%     | 63%     | 55%     | 46%      | 54%     | 57%     | 56%     |
| E. Uhler Ave.     | 19       | 12%      | 5%      | 34%     | 54%     | 63%      | 58%     | 32%     | 63%     |
| Mt. Vernon School | 19       | 10%      | 18%     | 60%     | 64%     | 95%      | 74%     | 89%     | 95%     |

Based on the questionnaire responses obtained by the applicant, approximately 46 % of library patrons drive to the library, 32 % walk, 19 % do some combination of walking and driving, and 2 % take the bus or bicycle.

The parking surveys indicate that parking capacity in the vicinity of the library is sufficient to meet the current and anticipated demand for the proposed addition. As with any parking requirement there is a balance between the needs of the facility, minimizing the loss of open space and impact on the adjoining neighborhoods. In this case because of the shared parking agreement between the schools and the library, significant amount of on-street parking that is available, staff supports the proposed parking reduction.

**Parking Reduction:**

As a technical matter, approximately 27 off-street parking spaces are required for the proposed addition. However, given the constraints of the site, the applicant is unable to provide any additional off-street parking spaces. In an earlier iteration of the site plan, the applicant had proposed to reconfigure the existing staff parking/loading area located to the south of the existing library building along East Uhler Avenue to provide some additional spaces. However, the reconfiguration of this area resulted in 90 degree parking spaces, a condition strongly discouraged in the City Code and by both Planning and Zoning and Transportation and Environmental Services staff. Staffs' concern about this type of parking is related to safety, both for drivers backing out of the spaces onto a public street, itself an unsafe condition, and for pedestrians who would be forced to walk around vehicles overhanging the public sidewalk. The applicant acknowledged these concerns and agreed not to pursue providing 90 degree parking spaces in that location.

Staff has considered the information submitted by the applicant to justify their request for a parking reduction, has informally observed parking conditions in the area, and generally agrees with the applicant's assertion that there are parking spaces generally available for use by library patrons in the immediate vicinity of the library, due in part to the different peak hours of operation of the library, school and recreation center and to the arrangement that the library has to use off-site parking spaces on the school property during after school hours. In addition, the proposed expansion is sought to relieve overcrowded conditions within the existing library building, with no significant increase in library services to be provided, thus greatly reducing the likelihood that demand for additional parking spaces will be generated by the proposed addition. Finally, the provision of additional parking on the site would further reduce the remaining open space which staff strongly opposes. On balance, staff supports the applicant's request for a parking reduction subject to the continuation of its shared parking arranged with the school and has included a condition to this effect

**Open Space and Tree Preservation:**

One of the concerns raised by the schools, was to maintain the visibility of the existing school entrance of the western portion of the school building. This has been accommodated by providing an open space area unobstructed by the proposed addition and a pedestrian plaza on the northern portion of the site.



The recommendation of approval includes two very critical conditions. The first condition that has been included is to refine the design of the plaza, encourage seating areas and decorative materials to encourage its use and compliment the proposed library addition, school entrance and the recently completed Captain Rocky Versace Memorial at the Mount Vernon Avenue Recreation Center.

Secondly, as currently depicted on the site plan, a stormwater detention area is located between the front of the building and Commonwealth Avenue. There is a concern that the proposed depressed drainage area is not consistent with the character of the neighborhood or appropriate for the primary entrance to the library. To address this concern, staff recommends several conditions designed to improve the appearance of the area and lessen its impact on the streetscape. Staff recommends that the bio-retention filter area be revised so its appearance more closely resembles the existing, natural grade of the property, and may involve minor revisions to the building elevations such as an exposed foundation. In addition, staff is recommending that the landscaping materials within the bio-retention area primarily be turf, and decorative trees and plantings. These conditions are designed to create a more traditional front lawn area on Commonwealth Avenue, which functions as a primary entrance for the library, and enable the detention area to be incorporated into the design and landscaping of the plaza.

Front Yard Modification (Commonwealth Avenue):

The proposed addition is set back 20.4 feet (which includes the 3 feet eave) from Commonwealth Avenue. The front yard requirement in the R-2-5 zone is a minimum of 25 feet. A modification is requested to allow the addition to encroach into the front yard. Staff supports the front yard modification because the proposed addition is set back 23.4 feet, which maintains the setback similar to the existing library building, and neighborhood and is a minimum modification to the 25 feet required setback. Because the proposed 3 feet eave projects more than is permit by the Zoning Ordinance, the technical setback modification including the eave will be 20.4 feet, although the perceived setback from the street will be 23.4 feet.

Side Yard Modification (to east of proposed addition, by internal parking lot)

A side yard modification is also required to allow the addition to be, at the closest point, 7.58 ft from the side property line where a minimum of 25 feet is required. This requirement is triggered because the property on which the library is situated is considered to be a corner property, having two front and two side yards. The modification is requested to allow the proposed reading alcoves along the eastern facade of the addition, adjacent to the parking lot, to encroach into the required side yard. At the closest point (7.58 ft), an alcove will be located approximately 2 ft from the proposed sidewalk. Although extremely close to the sidewalk, the building will not encroach over the proposed sidewalk, and the sidewalk itself will be approximately five feet in width, which will allow sufficient pedestrian access past the building. At other points along the eastern facade, the building will be set back between 8.5 ft to 16 ft from the side property line.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends approval of the applicant's request for a development special use permit, with site plan, and modifications, a reduction of off-street parking for the expansion of the existing James M. Duncan Library.

STAFF: Eileen Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;  
Jeff Farner, Acting Chief, Development;  
Kathleen Beeton, Urban Planner;  
Laura Durham, Urban Planner.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Planning & Zoning

- F-1. Building height listed in General Note #13 is different from the height listed on Sheet #2, revise the plan accordingly. (P&Z)
- F-2. The applicant is advised that in order for the proposed bio-retention facility to have a 65% pollutant removal efficiency, the facility must treat the first one inch of runoff from the impervious surface within the drainage area.(T&ES)
- F-3. General Note #29 on the cover sheet is not acceptable in that simple form. Note on the site plan that no root system and/or canopy of existing trees to remain will be disturbed. (RPCA)
- F-4. Concur with numbers 1 through 5 listed under Police and Security Notes on sheet 1 of the blueprints. (Police)

Transportation & Environmental Services:

- 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 must comply with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act in accordance with Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance. (T&ES)
- C-3. The applicant must comply with the City of Alexandria, Erosion and Sediment Control Code, Section 5, Chapter 4. This includes naming a Responsible Land Disturber on the Erosion and Sediment Control sheets prior to engaging in land disturbing activities in accordance with Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Law. (T&ES)
- C-4. All required permits from Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Virginia Marine Resources must be in place for all project construction and mitigation work prior to release of the final site plan. This includes the new state requirement for a VPDES permit for all construction activities greater than 1 acre. (T&ES)
- C-5. A Certificate of occupancy shall be obtained prior to any occupancy of the building or portion thereof, in accordance with USBC 118.0. Acknowledged as General Note on plans. (Code Enforcement)

Police Department:

**(The following recommendation related to lighting has not been included as a condition; rather, staff has recommended that the applicant prepare a lighting plan to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES in consultation with the police, which will likely result in lower lighting levels than those desired by the Police.**

**R-1. A lighting plan has not been included with the blueprints. The lighting is to be a minimum of 2.0 foot candles minimum maintained for the parking lots, sidewalks, and all common areas. (Police)**

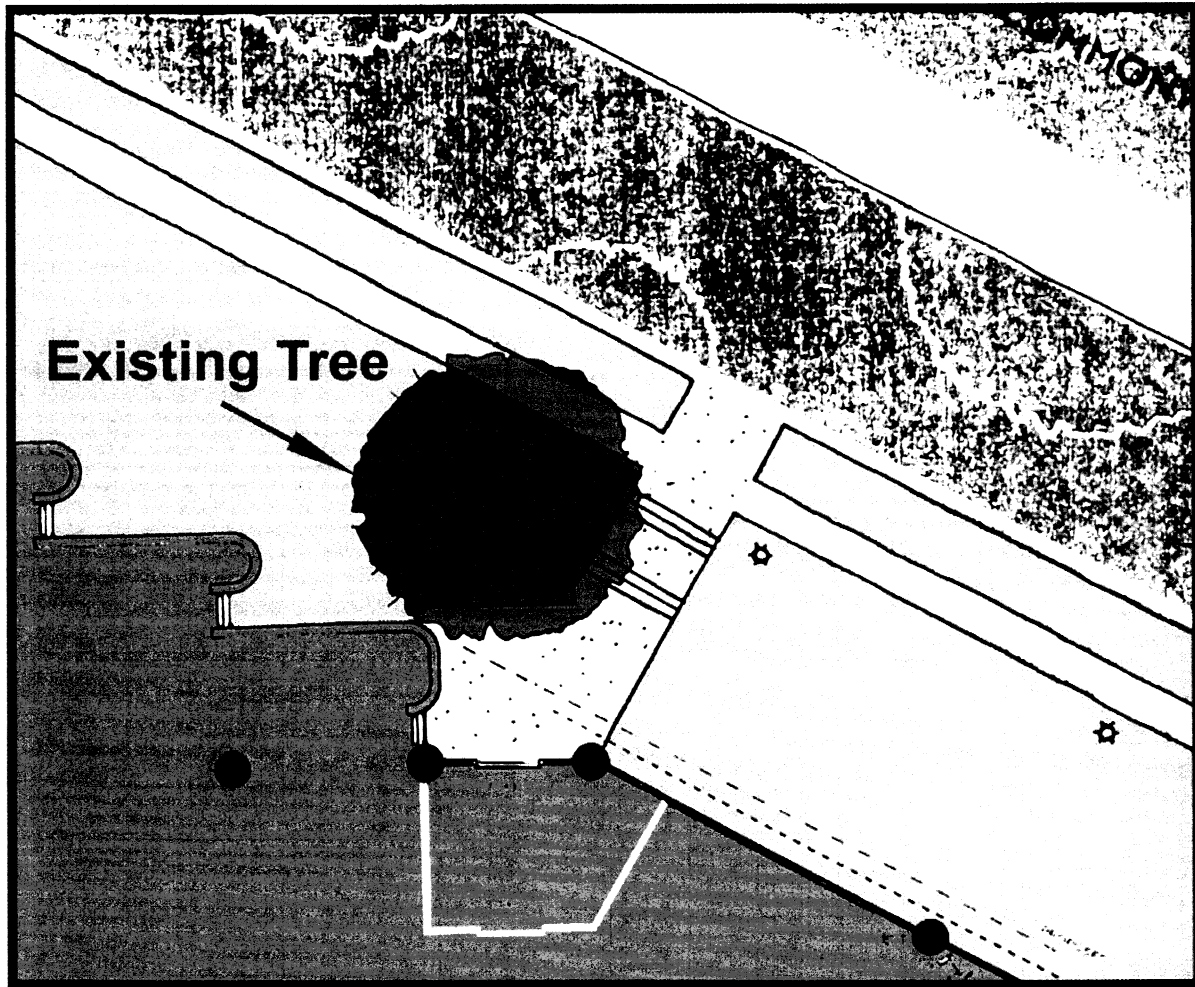
VAWC:

- F-1. Hydraulic calculations will be completed to verify main sizes upon final submittal of the site plan. Profiles will be required for hydraulic calculations.(VAWC)
- F-2. Existing water main layout is shown incorrectly on plans. (VAWC)
- F-3. Show one valve on fire hydrant lateral (three shown now). (VAWC)
- F-4. Call out 6" by 6" wet tap for the fire hydrant. (VAWC)
- F-5. Show a gate valve on the proposed fire service at the connection to the existing water main. (VAWC)
- F-6. Call out size of proposed fire service. (VAWC)



# Attachment Number 1

## Entrance Design Proposed by Staff



APPLICATION for  
DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL USE PERMIT with SITE PLAN  
DSUP # 2003-0016

PROJECT NAME: DUNCAN LIBRARY EXPANSION

PROPERTY LOCATION: 2501 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 34.02.01 ZONE: R.2.5

APPLICANT Name: ALEXANDRIA DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY OWNER Name: CITY OF ALEXANDRIA  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL: ADDITION TO EXISTING LIBRARY

MODIFICATIONS REQUESTED: RELIEF FROM: FRONT YARD SETBACKS (B.200(A)(1))  
PARKING SPACE COUNT (B.200(A)(7)) LOADING AREA SIZE (B.200(B)(3))

SUP's REQUESTED: LIBRARY USE IN R.2.5 ZONE

THE UNDERSIGNED hereby applies for Development Site Plan, with Special Use Permit, approval in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-301 (B) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

THE UNDERSIGNED also attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required of the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of his knowledge and belief.

STEPHEN W. KOENIG, AA  
Print Name of Applicant or Agent

[Signature]  
Signature

2107 MT. VERNON AVE.  
Mailing/Street Address

703.519.9592  
Telephone #

703.519.9604  
Fax #

ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301  
City and State Zip Code

JUNE 23, 2003  
Date

=====**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - OFFICE USE ONLY**=====

Application Received: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fee Paid & Date: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Received Plans for Completeness: \_\_\_\_\_  
Received Plans for Preliminary: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION - PLANNING COMMISSION: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION - CITY COUNCIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan (DSUP) # 2003-0016

All applicants must complete this form.

Supplemental forms are required for child care facilities, restaurants, automobile oriented uses and freestanding signs requiring special use permit approval.

1. The applicant is the (check one):

Owner                       Contract Purchaser

Lessee                       Other: CITY OF ALEXANDRIA  
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent.

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If property owner or applicant is being represented by an authorized agent such as an attorney, realtor, or other person for which there is some form of compensation, does this agent or the business in which the agent is employed have a business license to operate in the City of Alexandria, Virginia?

- Yes.                      Provide proof of current City business license (SEE ATTACHED)
- No.                        The agent shall obtain a business license prior to filing application, if required by the City Code.

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

2. The applicant shall describe below the nature of the request in detail so that the Planning Commission and City Council can understand the nature of the operation and the use, including such items as the nature of the activity, the number and type of patrons, the number of employees, the hours, how parking is to be provided for employees and patrons, and whether the use will generate any noise. If not appropriate to the request, delete pages 4-7.  
(Attach additional sheets if necessary)

REJUVENATION AND EXPANSION  
OF EXISTING DUNCAN BRANCH  
LIBRARY.

THE EXISTING BUILDING WILL REMAIN  
AND WILL BE SELECTIVELY RENOVATED.  
THE ADDITION OF 5300 SQUARE FEET  
WILL ACCOMMODATE THE ADULT  
COLLECTION, A NEW READING ROOM,  
A PERIODICALS AREA AND A NEW  
INFORMATION DESK, AS WELL AS  
A NEW ENTRANCE TO THE LIBRARY.

Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan (DSUP) # 2003-0016

3. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect?  
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

APPROXIMATELY 500 - 600 PATRONS  
PER DAY BETWEEN 9 AM + 9 PM.

4. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect?  
Specify time period (i.e. day, hour, or shift).

APPROXIMATELY 8 STAFF BETWEEN  
9 AM + 9 PM.

5. Describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:

| Day        | Hours        | Day        | Hours         |
|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| <u>MON</u> | <u>9 - 9</u> | <u>FRI</u> | <u>9 - 6</u>  |
| <u>TUE</u> | <u>9 - 9</u> | <u>SAT</u> | <u>9 - 5</u>  |
| <u>WED</u> | <u>9 - 9</u> | <u>SUN</u> | <u>CLOSED</u> |
| <u>THU</u> | <u>9 - 9</u> |            |               |

6. Describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use:

A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.

MECHANICAL SYSTEM: TYPICAL ROOFTOP UNITS BEHIND EXISTING  
PATRONS: MINIMUM NOISE EXISTING OR ANTICIPATED.  
PATRIET.

B. How will the noise from patrons be controlled?

STAFF WILL MONITOR ANY NOISE FROM  
PATRONS.

7. Describe any potential odors emanating from the proposed use and plans to control them:

NO ODORS.

Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan (DSUP) # 2003-0016

8. Provide information regarding trash and litter generated by the use:

A. What type of trash and garbage will be generated by the use?

PRIMARILY PAPER WASTE

B. How much trash and garbage will be generated by the use?

3-4 STANDARD CITY TRASH CONTAINERS PER WEEK

2 RECYCLE BINS PER WEEK

C. How often will trash be collected?

ONCE PER WEEK

D. How will you prevent littering on the property, streets and nearby properties?

NO EXTERIOR LITTER PROBLEM EXISTING  
OR ANTICIPATED

9. Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

Yes.  No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

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10. Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

Yes.  No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

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11. What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of residents, employees and patrons?

STAFF IS VERY FAMILIAR WITH THE PATRON POPULATION. STAFF WILL CAREFULLY AND CONTINUOUSLY MONITOR THE ENTIRE FACILITY.

**ALCOHOL SALES**

12. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?

[ ] Yes.  No.

If yes, describe alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales. Existing uses must describe their existing alcohol sales and/or service and identify any proposed changes in that aspect of the operation.

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**PARKING AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS**

13. Provide information regarding the availability of off-street parking:

A. How many parking spaces are required for the proposed use pursuant to section 8-200 (A) of the zoning ordinance?

26 SPACES : 5,000 NET S.F. ÷ 200 SF PER

B. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:

- 8 Standard spaces (EXISTING)
- 5 Compact spaces (PROPOSED)
- 1 Handicapped accessible spaces (EXISTING)
- Other.

Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan (DSUP) # 2003-0016

- C. Where is required parking located? (check one)  on-site  off-site.  
(PARTIAL) (PARTIAL)

If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located:

SURROUNDING AREA PUBLIC ON-STREET PARKING

Pursuant to section 8-200 (C) of the zoning ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.

- D. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the zoning ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

14. Provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

- A. How many loading spaces are required for the use, per section 8-200 (B) of the zoning ordinance? (1) ONE (> 2500 SF AND < 20,000 SF)
- B. How many loading spaces are available for the use? (1) ONE (SUBSTANDARD SIZE)

- C. Where are off-street loading facilities located? \_\_\_\_\_

ADJACENT TO THE STAFF ENTRANCE  
IN THE SOUTH SIDE PARKING AREA.

- D. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?

9 AM - 5 PM

- E. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?

TWICE PER DAY. TYPICAL UTILITY VAN.

15. Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?

ACCESS IS ADEQUATE



**PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION**

Supplemental information to be completed by applicants requesting special use permit approval of a reduction in the required parking pursuant to section 8-100(A)(4) or (5).

1. Describe the requested parking reduction. (e.g. number of spaces, stacked parking, size, off-site location)

EXISTING: 8 STANDARD SPACES + 1 HANDICAPPED SPACE

NEW REQUIREMENT: 20 SPACES

NEW PROPOSAL: 5 COMPACT STAFF SPACES @ SOUTH  
(SEE ATTACHED FEASIBILITY STUDY PARKING ANALYSIS)

2. Provide a statement of justification for the proposed parking reduction.

SEE ATTACHED FEASIBILITY STUDY PARKING  
ANALYSIS

3. Why is it not feasible to provide the required parking?

THE TRIANGULAR SITE IS SMALL. THE  
PERIMETER IS CURRENTLY IN USE FOR  
EITHER PARKING OR A DRIVEWAY.

4. Will the proposed reduction reduce the number of available parking spaces below the number of existing parking spaces?  Yes.  No.

5. If the requested reduction is for more than five parking spaces, the applicant must submit a Parking Management Plan which identifies the location and number of parking spaces both on-site and off-site, the availability of on-street parking, any proposed methods of mitigating negative affects of the parking reduction.

6. The applicant must also demonstrate that the reduction in parking will not have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

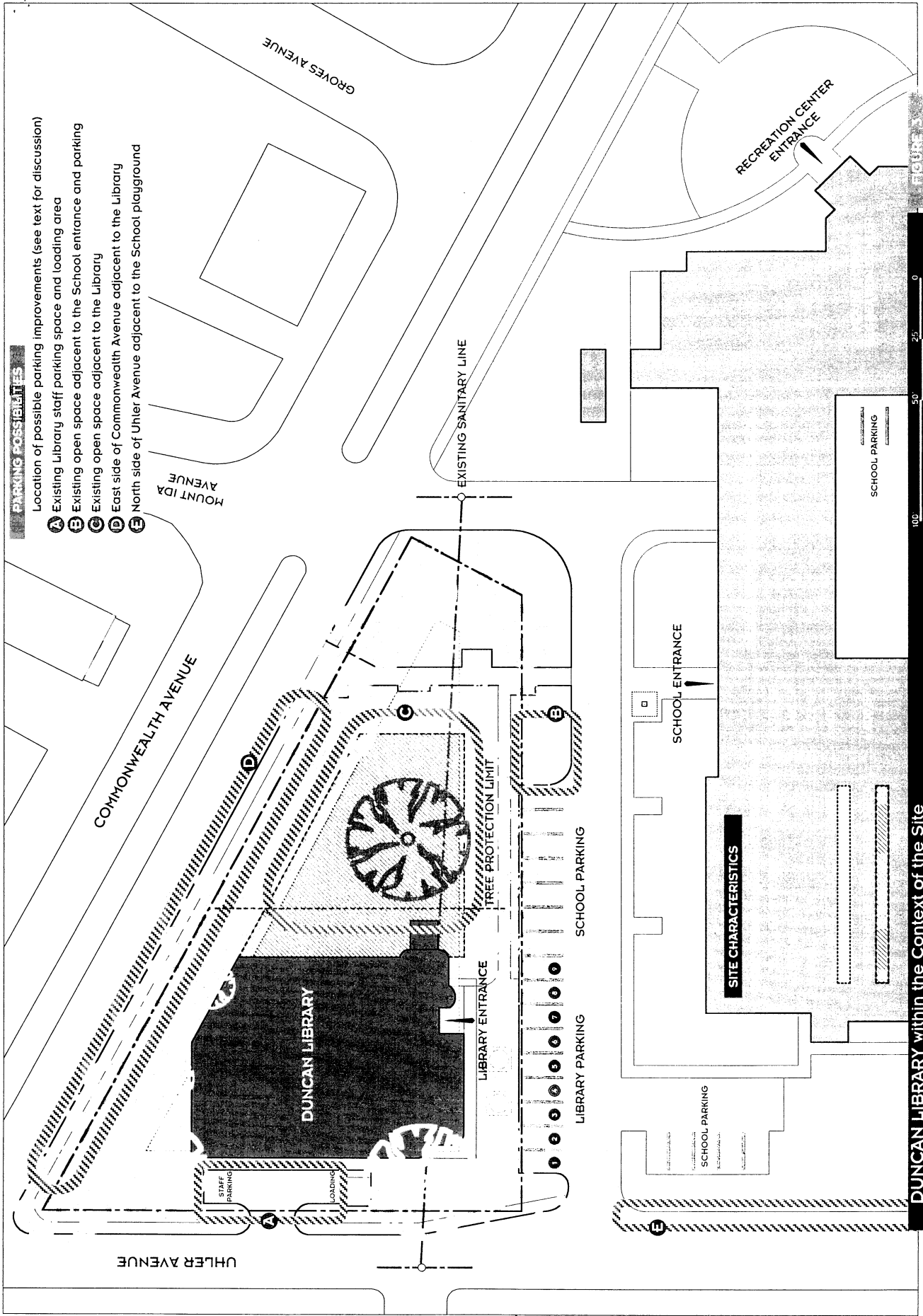
DSUP 2003-0016

EXPANSION OF DUNCAN LIBRARY ■ F E A S I B I L I T Y S T U D Y

Analysis of the Site

**PARKING POSSIBILITIES**

- Location of possible parking improvements (see text for discussion)
- A** Existing Library staff parking space and loading area
- B** Existing open space adjacent to the School entrance and parking
- C** Existing open space adjacent to the Library
- D** East side of Commonwealth Avenue adjacent to the Library
- E** North side of Uhler Avenue adjacent to the School playground



DUNCAN LIBRARY within the Context of the Site

FIGURE 3

The NEIGHBORHOOD and the LIBRARY

- The NEIGHBORHOOD
  - > The neighborhood within which Duncan Library resides is a complex and successful blend of long established residential development, commercial activity and vital public institutions.
  - > Commonwealth Avenue is a beautiful boulevard threading through a predominantly small scale domestic context; in combination with Uhler Avenue it forms the threshold between the library and the extensive residential fabric to the west and south.
  - > Mount Vernon Avenue is an active, small scale, mixed use thoroughfare which centerlines a narrow band of property zoned CL / Commercial Low as it traverses north / south through Del Ray just to the east of the Library.
  - > Duncan Library shares a block with Mount Vernon Community School and the Mount Vernon Recreation Center. This is a very complex site which has accrued its density overtime through multiple rejuvenations of the School, the creation of the Library and the recent erection of the Recreation Center.

- The LIBRARY
  - > Duncan has evolved over thirty years into a true community institution. Its dedicated staff skillfully serves patrons from around the city as well as successive generations of local families.
  - > The library is modest in scale, comfortably accessible to pedestrians and generally convenient.
  - > Physically and functionally, it is an integral part of its neighborhood.

- USE and ACCESS
  - > Patterns of Use
    - > Library use is generally light in the morning, moderate in the middle of the day, and intensifies during the afternoon and into the evening. The library is open Monday through Saturday.
    - > School use is consistent across the hours of the school day, Monday through Friday. School bus, automobile and pedestrian traffic is heavy during concentrated half-hour time frames early in the morning and in mid-afternoon. After school and evening events are variable, with lighter pedestrian flows and parking utilization.
    - > Recreation Center use is lighter early in the day, dependably heavy in the late afternoon and variable but active in the evening. The center is open seven days per week.

- > Means of Access
  - > Responses were received from citizens as follows to the question: "How do you generally travel to Duncan Library?"
    - > "Drive" ..... 46 %
    - > "Walk" ..... 33 %
    - > Walk and Drive Combination ..... 19 %
    - > Other: Bus / Bicycle ..... 2 %

25

DSUP 2003-0046

DSUP 2003-0016

**P L A C E** ..... Analysis of the Site

**The NEIGHBORHOOD and the LIBRARY**

• PARKING

- > Local Parking Capacity
  - > Within a moderate walking distance of the Library (1,000' radius), parking spaces are located on the primary streets surrounding the library as follows (see figure 2):
    - > Duncan Library ~ spaces dedicated to library use ..... 9
    - > Commonwealth Avenue ..... 110
    - > Mount Vernon Avenue ..... 100
    - > Uhler Avenue ..... 19
    - > Mount Vernon School ~ spaces dedicated to school use during school hours ..... 19

> Spaces are also available on adjacent residential streets.

> Local Parking Availability

> Parking spaces in the vicinity of the Library are available in the following proportions:

| LOCATION              | NO. OF SPACES |       |       | WEEKDAY |        |       | SATURDAY |       |      |      |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------|-------|---------|--------|-------|----------|-------|------|------|
|                       | 10:00A        | 1:00P | 4:00P | 7:00P   | 10:00A | 1:00P | 4:00P    | 7:00P |      |      |
| > Duncan Library      |               | 9     | 38 %  | 40 %    | 24 %   | 40 %  | 67 %     | 11 %  | 33 % | 67 % |
| > Commonwealth Avenue |               | 110   | 48 %  | 48 %    | 36 %   | 38 %  | 73 %     | 71 %  | 65 % | 68 % |
| > Mount Vernon Avenue |               | 100   | 61 %  | 63 %    | 63 %   | 55 %  | 46 %     | 54 %  | 57 % | 56 % |
| > Uhler Avenue        |               | 19    | 12 %  | 5 %     | 34 %   | 54 %  | 63 %     | 58 %  | 32 % | 63 % |
| > Mount Vernon School |               | 19    | 10 %  | 18 %    | 60 %   | 64 %  | 95 %     | 74 %  | 89 % | 95 % |

UN

> Perception of the Existing Situation

> Responses were received from citizens as follows to the question: "If you drive, how would you characterize the current parking situation?"

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| > "Acceptable"   | 42 % |
| > "Inconvenient" | 22 % |
| > No Opinion     | 20 % |
| > "Unacceptable" | 9 %  |
| > "Convenient"   | 7 %  |

> Future Parking Requirement

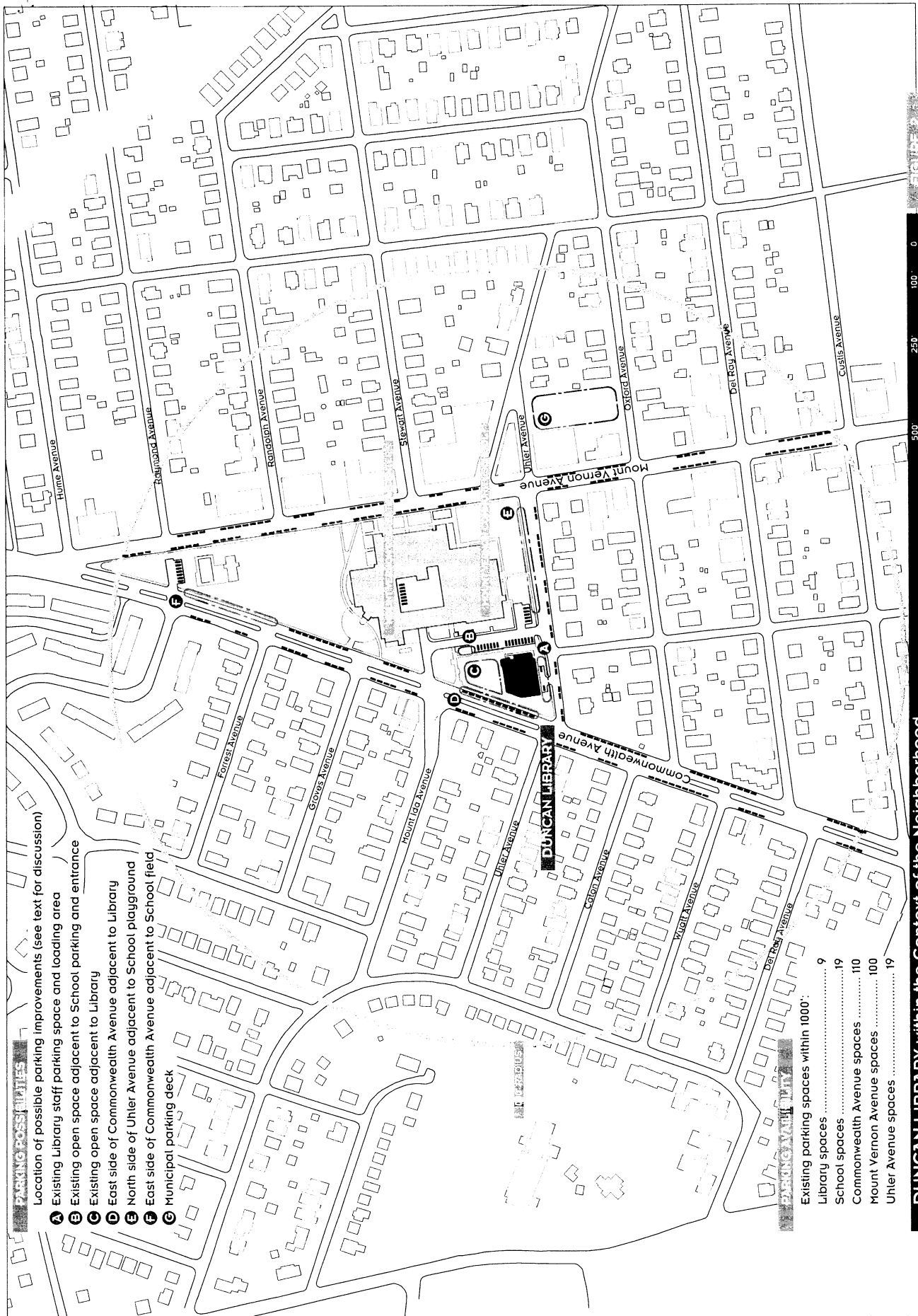
- > It is reasonably anticipated that from a regulatory perspective, the ratio of current dedicated parking to the existing library area would be acknowledged as an existing condition to-be-continued.
- > The technical parking requirement for expansion of the library would be approximately 22 spaces, depending upon the actual size of an addition (current assumption is 4,400 net sf @ 200 sf per space).
- > It is understood that the actual pattern, current and future, of citizens' travel and parking in the neighborhood of the library is more significant than the specific parking requirements by regulation.
- > Any potential increase to daily patronage at Duncan Library following an expansion cannot be precisely calculated. It is expected that an enlargement at the scale currently under consideration will be predominantly dedicated to decreasing the density of the large collection and offering a modest increase in spatial comfort to approximately the same number of users currently patronizing the library.

Analysis of the Site

**PARKING POSSIBILITIES**

Location of possible parking improvements (see text for discussion)

- A** Existing Library staff parking space and loading area
- B** Existing open space adjacent to School playground and entrance
- C** Existing open space adjacent to Library
- D** East side of Commonwealth Avenue adjacent to Library
- E** North side of Ulter Avenue adjacent to School playground
- F** East side of Commonwealth Avenue adjacent to School field
- G** Municipal parking deck



**PARKING AVAILABILITY**

| Existing parking spaces within 1000': |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Library spaces                        | 9   |
| School spaces                         | 19  |
| Commonwealth Avenue spaces            | 110 |
| Mount Vernon Avenue spaces            | 100 |
| Ulter Avenue spaces                   | 19  |

**DUNCAN LIBRARY within the Context of the Neighborhood**

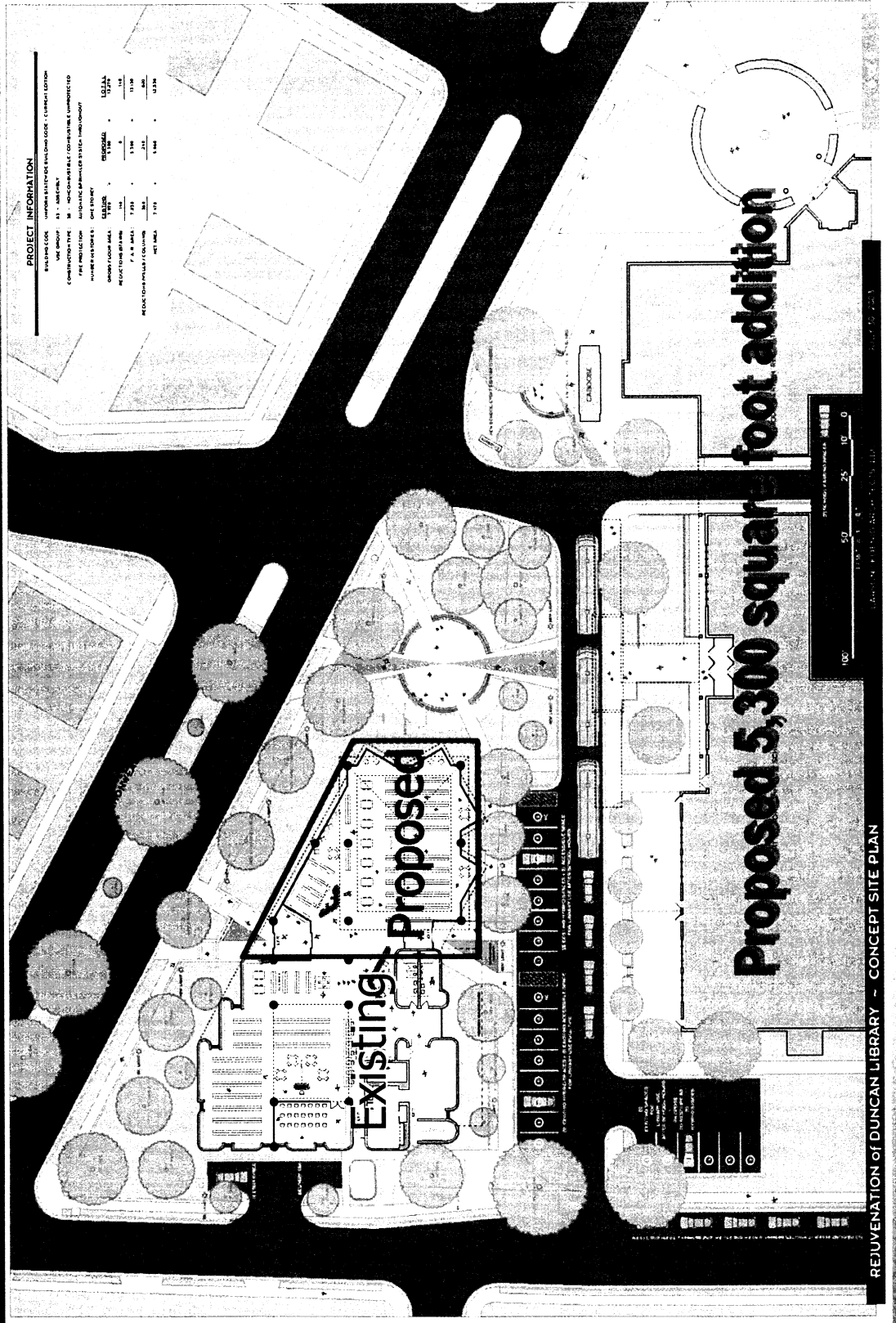
**FIGURE 2**

• PARKING (continued)

- > Parking Improvements ~ Additional Surface Parking Possibilities (see figures 2 + 3)
  - (A) Existing library staff parking area ..... additional spaces : 4 ±
    - + additional parking in a very convenient location
    - limited depth, backing onto Uhler Avenue required
  - (B) Existing open space adjacent to school parking and entrance .....additional spaces : 2 ±
    - + additional parking in a very convenient location
    - competes with the ability to improve the character of the school entrance
  - (C) Existing open space adjacent to the north side of the Library .....additional spaces : 10 ±
    - + additional parking in a very convenient location
    - erases the primary open space on the site with surface parking
    - competes with the ability to expand the existing building footprint
  - (D) East side of Commonwealth adjacent to the Library ~ 45° spaces .....additional spaces : 5 ±
    - + additional parking in a very convenient location
    - competes with the bicycle lane and pedestrian walkways
    - entails the loss of several mature trees
    - brings vehicles into closer proximity to the library
  - (E) North side of Uhler Avenue adjacent to school playground .....additional spaces : 12 ±
    - + use of an open curb currently proscribed except drop off and pickup
    - + additional parking in a very convenient location
  - (F) East side of Commonwealth Avenue adjacent to the school fields .....additional spaces : 12 ±
    - + use of an open curb currently proscribed
    - shortens the right lane on Commonwealth approaching the intersection with Mount Vernon Avenue
  - (G) Municipal Parking deck between Uhler and Oxford Avenues .....additional spaces : ?
    - + emblematic of a potential parking strategy at the scale of the neighborhood
    - somewhat obscure location
- > Observations about the Parking Issue
  - > Actual parking capacity in the vicinity of the library is reasonable for the current level of demand, as indicated by the significant proportion of available spaces at most times of day.
  - > The discontinuity of peak use between the school and library increases the efficiency with which the existing parking is utilized and reduces the impact of any incremental increase in use of the Library.
  - > Planned enlargement of the library will not add substantial additional service capacity, rather it will primarily relieve years of over compression of the collection, staff and patrons.
  - > Modest expansion of the library at the scale envisioned, without adding substantial additional parking on site, is possible without exacerbating the overall parking situation.

# Duncan Library Expansion

## Site Plan



#12

DSUP #2003-00/6

# Duncan Library Expansion

Issues to be Addressed



Design



Archeology/Tree Protection



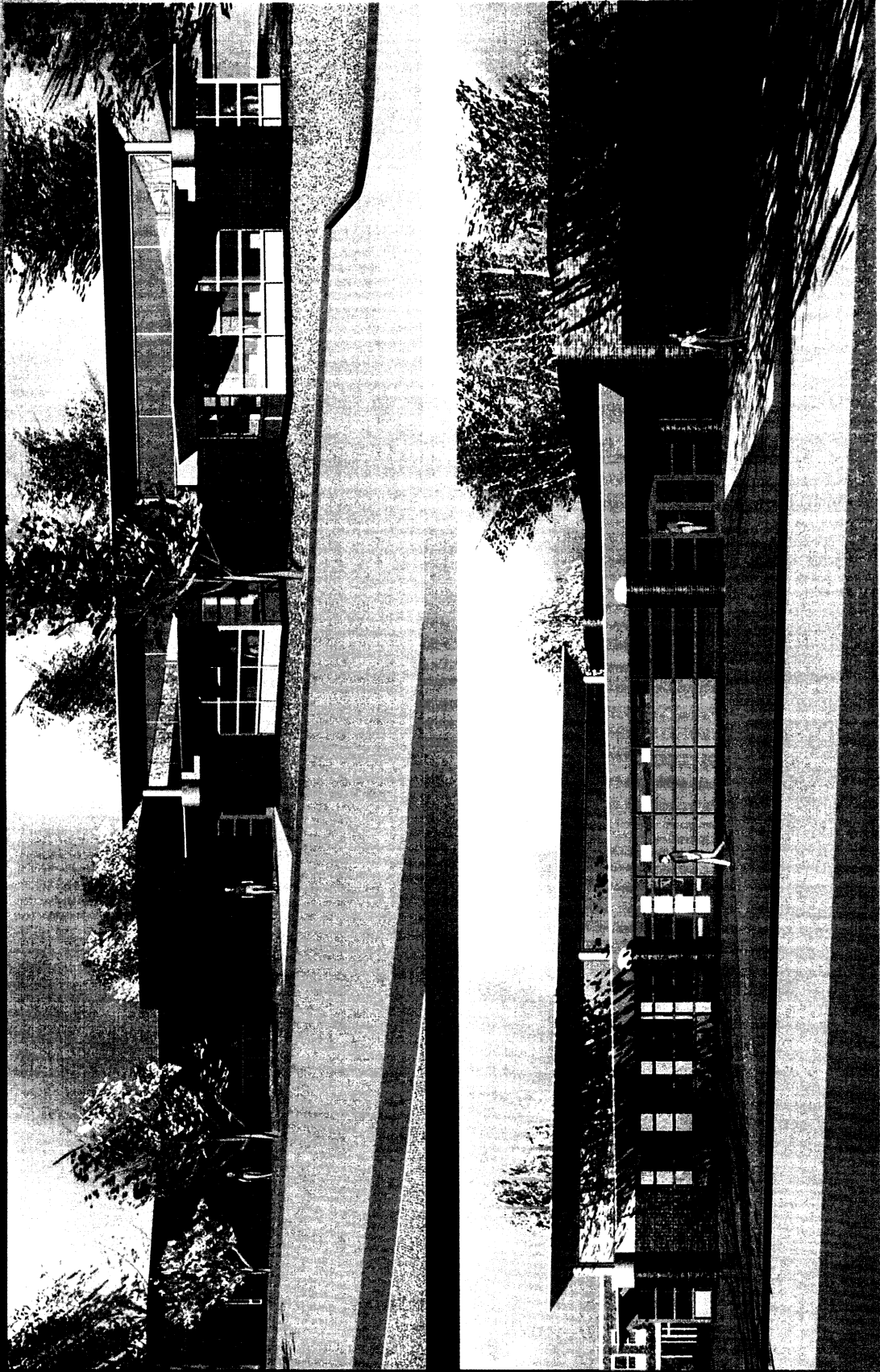
History

September 4, 2003



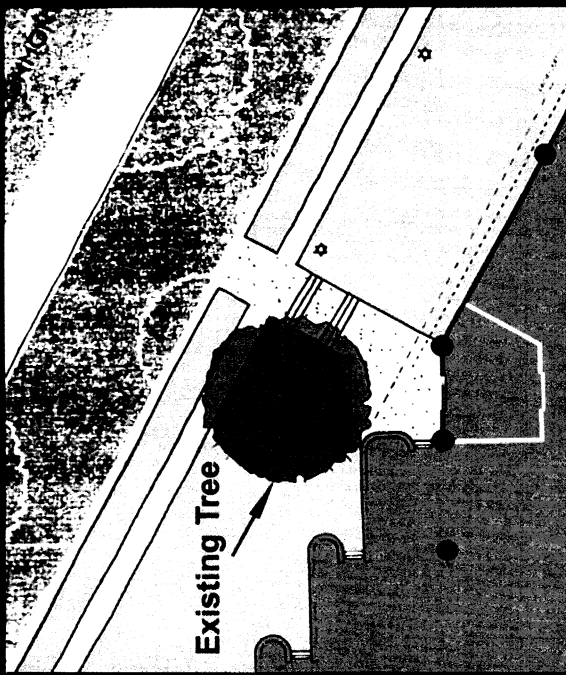
# Duncan Library Expansion

## Building Design



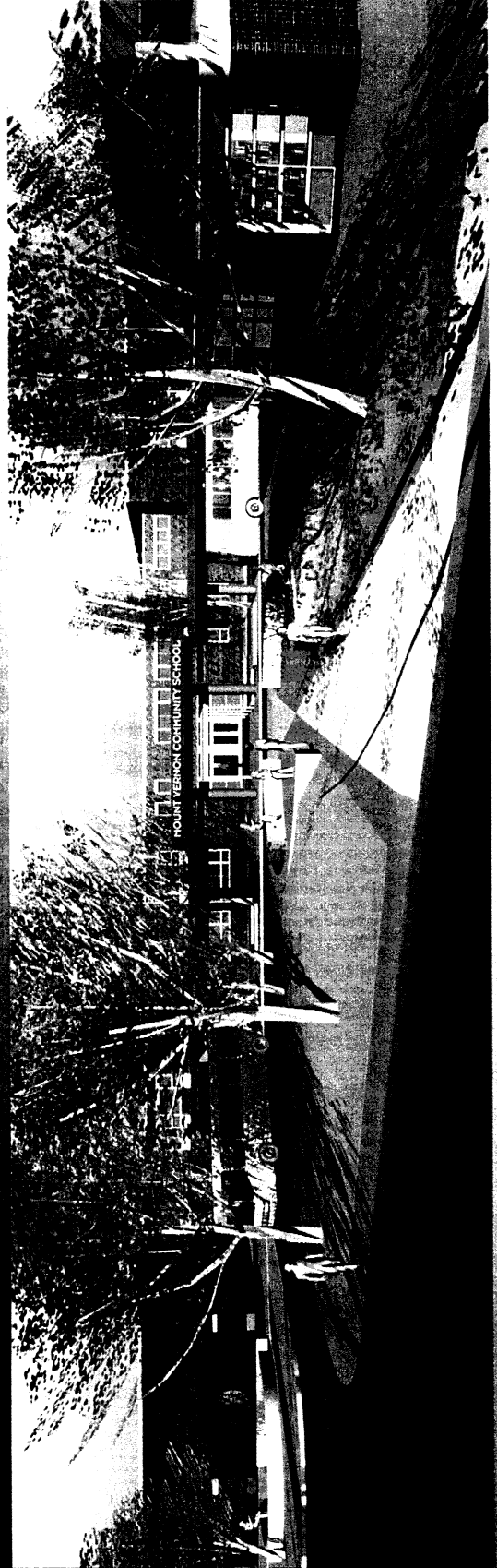
# Duncan Library Expansion

## Open Space and Tree Protection



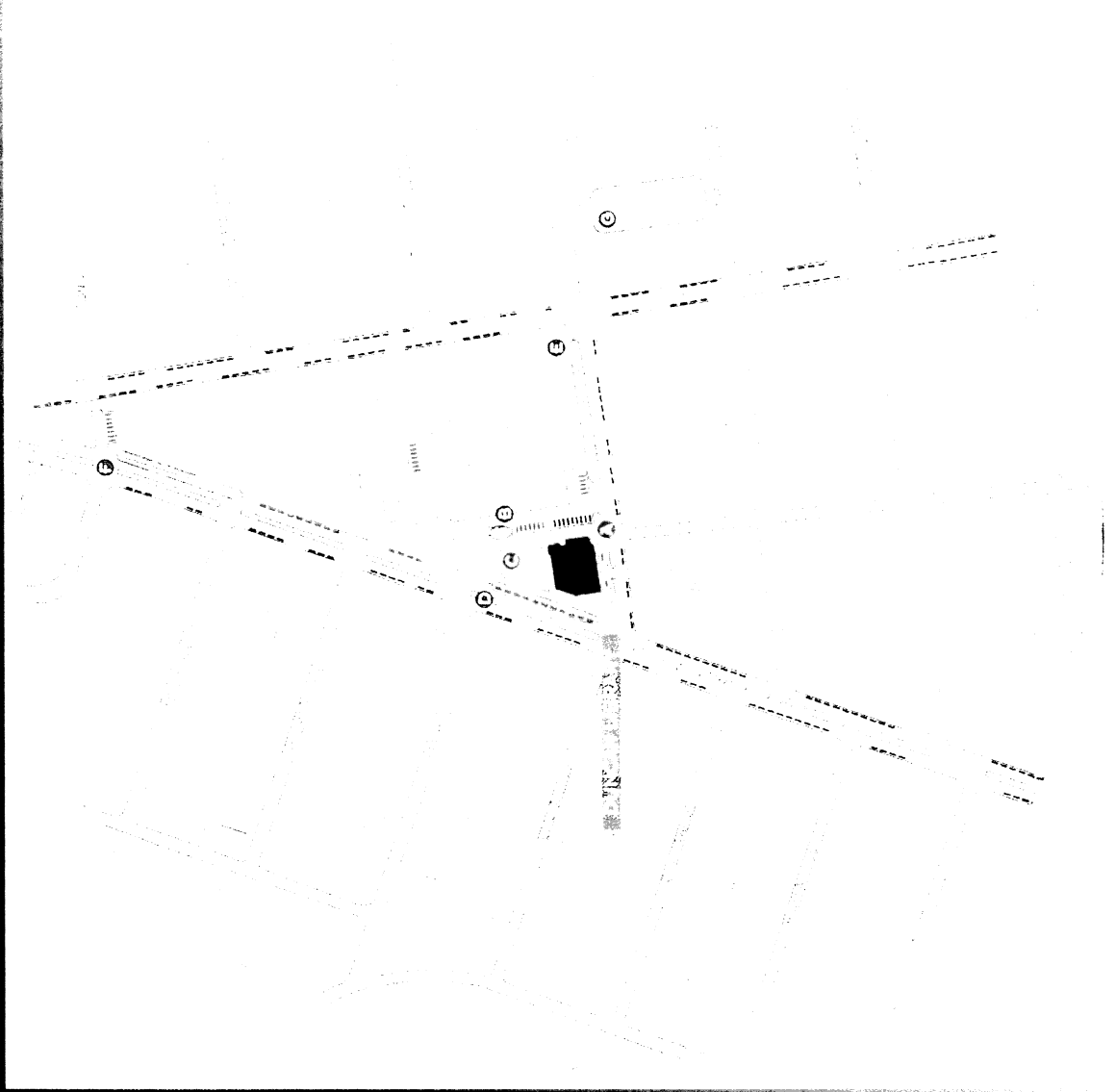
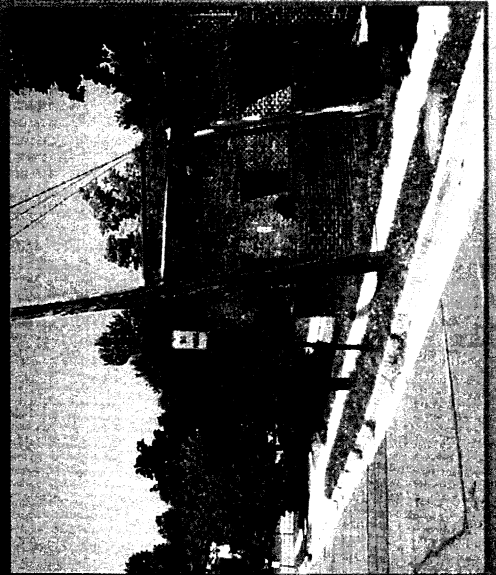
▲ 29 existing trees protected

▲ new trees on Commonwealth Ave

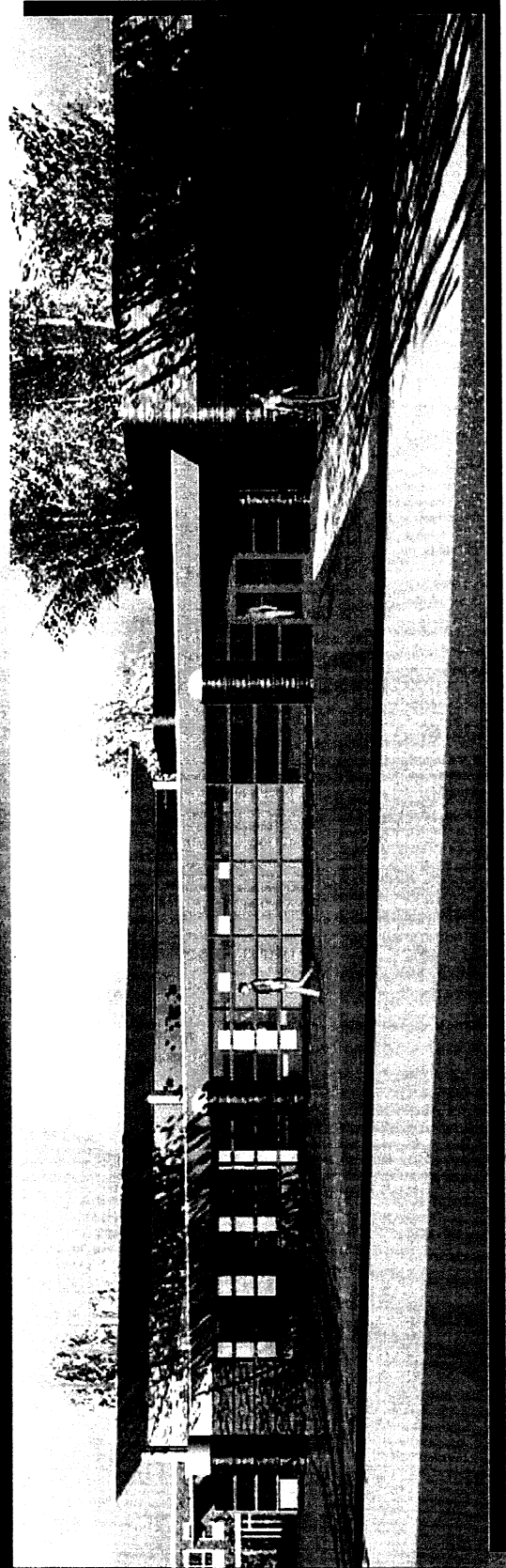
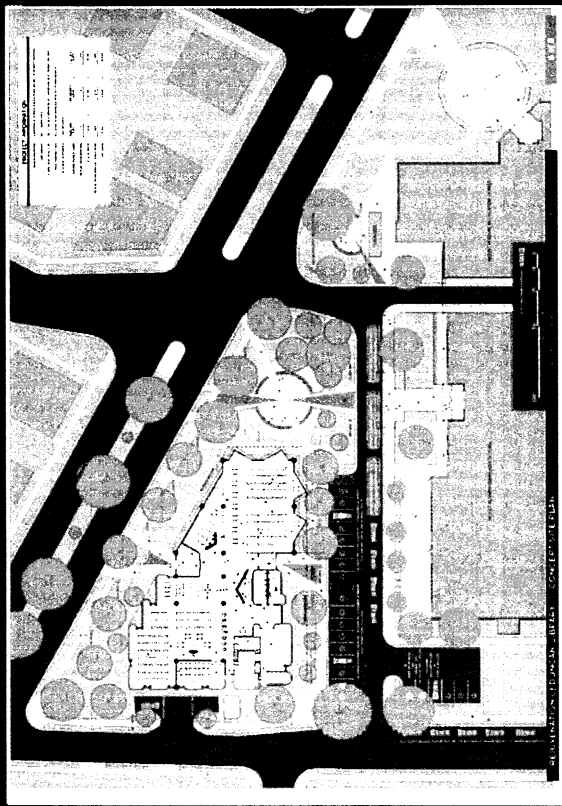


# Duncan Library Expansion

Parking



# Duncan Library Expansion



PC Docket Item #12  
DSUP 2003-0016

# Del Ray Citizens Association

PO Box 2233

ALEXANDRIA VA 22301

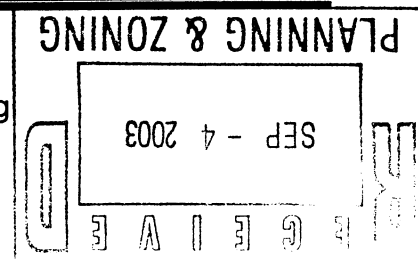
ESTABLISHED 1954

To: Members of Alexandria Planning Commission  
Eileen Fogarty, Director, Office of Planning and Zoning

From: Amy Slack, Land Use Committee Co-Chair  
Sarah Haut, Land Use Committee Co-Chair  
Justin Wilson, President

Date: September 2, 2003

Subject: DSUP#2003-0016, Request to expand the existing James M. Duncan Library and a reduction in parking at 2501 Commonwealth Avenue.



In March 2003, the LU Committee met with representatives of the applicant to discuss a one story design concept. *We recommended support for the one story expansion of Duncan Library even in light of the loss of open space; that the remaining open space be considered in an integrated plan that should improve pedestrian flow and enhance the Mount Vernon Community School entrance; and that consideration for parking be dealt with in the SUP process. The Executive Board agreed, enthusiastically expressed their support for the greatest expansion possible, and wished to maximize the available open space in the SUP process.*

A letter to that effect urging General Services to move forward was sent to City Manager, Phil Sunderland, to General Services Division Chief, George Delimba, and it was published in the Association newsletter, May issue.

The applicant, City of Alexandria Department of General Services, presented the one story concept design at a meeting on June 26, 2003. The meeting was announced as a presentation to the general public; members of the Committee and Executive Board were present.

The addition appears to be built on grade with the existing structure. The overall height and mass is similar. Architectural elements, such as rounded columns from the existing library and entrance walkways from the adjacent Rocky Versace Vietnam Veterans Memorial Plaza are incorporated. New entrances, designed to bridge the transition of existing library to new addition, provide direct access to the library parking lot and fronts onto Commonwealth Avenue, addressing the surrounding community. The emphasis is on a new light-filled space appropriate to house the adult collection, complete with quiet reading nooks. The existing library will safely house the children's collection and activities and provide much needed work space for library staff. Information from that meeting has been posted on the architects' web site for the past two months.

At the Land Use Committee meeting on August 12, and September 3, 2003, we discussed the design and changes recommended by staff. Foremost, committee members familiar with construction costs believe the funding allocated by City Council to be minimal, at best. Changes that increase the projected design/construction cost are of concern to them.

1/2 HS

The committee agrees that the architects have adequately addressed many community concerns, such as; integration of the open space to the adjacent school and recreation facilities, visibility of the school, maximizing the site. We agree with staff recommendations to reduce the scope of paved areas to increase permeable surfaces, the relocation of some existing trees, and the location of the monument sign.

*We do not agree with the following staff recommendations:*

- *To preserve a Japanese Pagodatree at the entrance facing Commonwealth Avenue.*

Reasons:

Staff proposes a walkway for the main entrance that is not ADA compliant nor helps integrate the library with the adjacent facilities.

Staff suggests a retaining wall requiring footers which must cut into the root system. This undermines a costly preservation effort.

The tree obscures the new entrance. Its 32' tree canopy overhangs and has damaged the existing building roof; pruning branches, sufficient to eliminate further damage, ruins its ornamental value. At maturity, this species reaches a broad crown of 50' - 75'.

Costs:

Pruning + construction preservation + future maintenance pruning versus removal + replacement.

We feel that a replacement tree is a more suitable, cost effective solution.

- *To alter the bio-retention area grade and expose of a portion of the foundation.*

Reasons:

To function properly, a bio-retention area is unsuitable as active open space or planting areas. Although uncharacteristic in the neighborhood, it is required by law and will be a grassy open area.

Staff suggests revising the depth. To compensate for the loss in volume, one must increase the area and reduce the remaining usable open space, a strong community concern.

An exposed foundation is uncharacteristic of the existing structure; a visual affront.

Costs:

Additional brick facing, alternative bio-retention system.

*The committee recommended to support the one story concept proposal with expressed reservations to staff recommendations.*

At their August 21, 2003 meeting, the Executive Board voted in favor of the committee recommendation to support the one story concept and acknowledged the committee's reservations.

We request your support for this position and welcome your questions and comments. Please feel free to contact Co-chairs Amy Slack at 703-549-3412 or Sarah Haut at 703-838-9060 and President Justin Wilson at 703-299 1576.

12  
9-13-03



<mjkandg@erols.com>

To: <eileen.fogarty@ci.alexandria.va.us>

CC:

09/04/2003 03:50 PM

Subject: City of Alexandria Website Contact Us - EMail for Eileen Fogarty  
(eileen.fogarty@ci.alexandria.va.us)

Please respond to  
mjkandg

DSUP#2003-0016  
PC Docket Item #12

**Time:** [Thu Sep 04, 2003 15:50:19]

**IP Address:** [138.88.13.6]

**Response requested:**

**First Name:** Karen

**Last Name:** Helbrecht

**Street Address:** 419 E. Windsor Ave.

**City:** Alexandria

**State:** VA

**Zip:** 22301

**Phone:** 703 548-5784

**Email Address:** mjkandg@erols.com

**Comments:** I am writing in support of the design for the new Duncan Library in our neighborhood. I don't know if I will be able to make it to the Planning Commission meeting tonight, and I hope this message will get through in time. The architect, and the city staff have been very inclusive throughout the process. I live in the neighborhood and my children attend Mount Vernon Community School. The design reflects input from all who expressed concerns or issues.

The design should be supported by the Planning Commission as proposed.

Thank you!

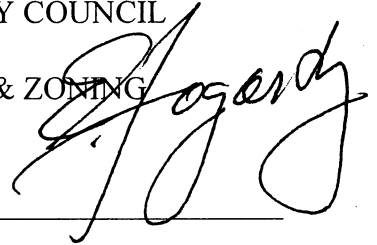


#12 Duncan Library

*City of Alexandria, Virginia*

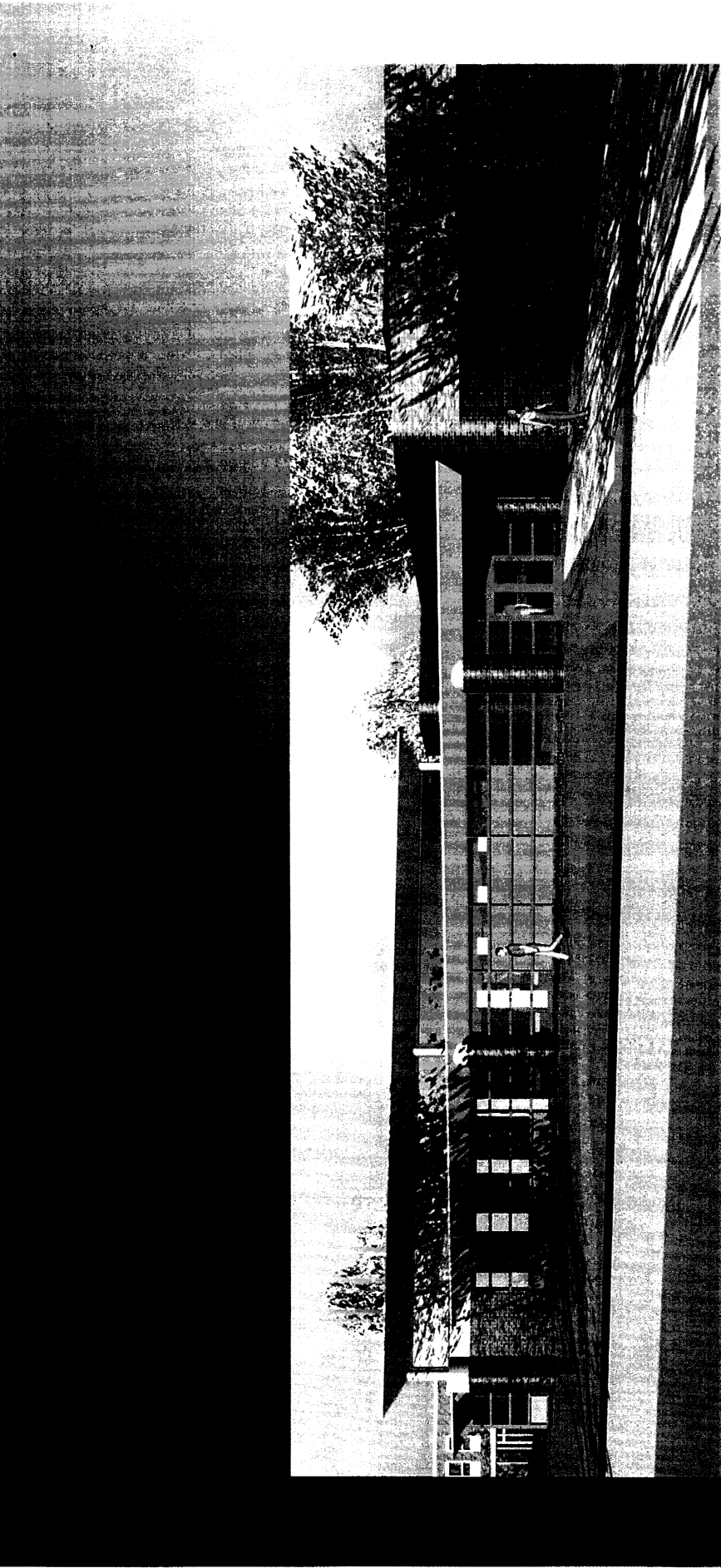
MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 13, 2003  
TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: EILEEN FOGARTY, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & ZONING  
SUBJECT: DSUP #2003-0016 - DUNCAN LIBRARY



The sculpture "All Things Come in Threes" is located on the Duncan Library property, north of the existing library building and adjacent to a sidewalk that provides access to the entrance of the Mount Vernon Elementary School from Commonwealth Avenue. As part of the development proposal for the expansion of Duncan Library, a new plaza and walkways are proposed to be constructed in the vicinity of the sculpture. In order to ensure that the sculpture is relocated or incorporated into the design of the plaza, staff recommends a new condition to read as follows:

- 48. The existing public art sculpture located on the northeastern portion of the site shall be relocated from its existing location or incorporated into the design of the plaza in consultation with the City's Commission for the Arts and the Alexandria City Public Schools.**



# Duncan Library Expansion

## City of Alexandria



September 13, 2003

# Duncan Library Expansion

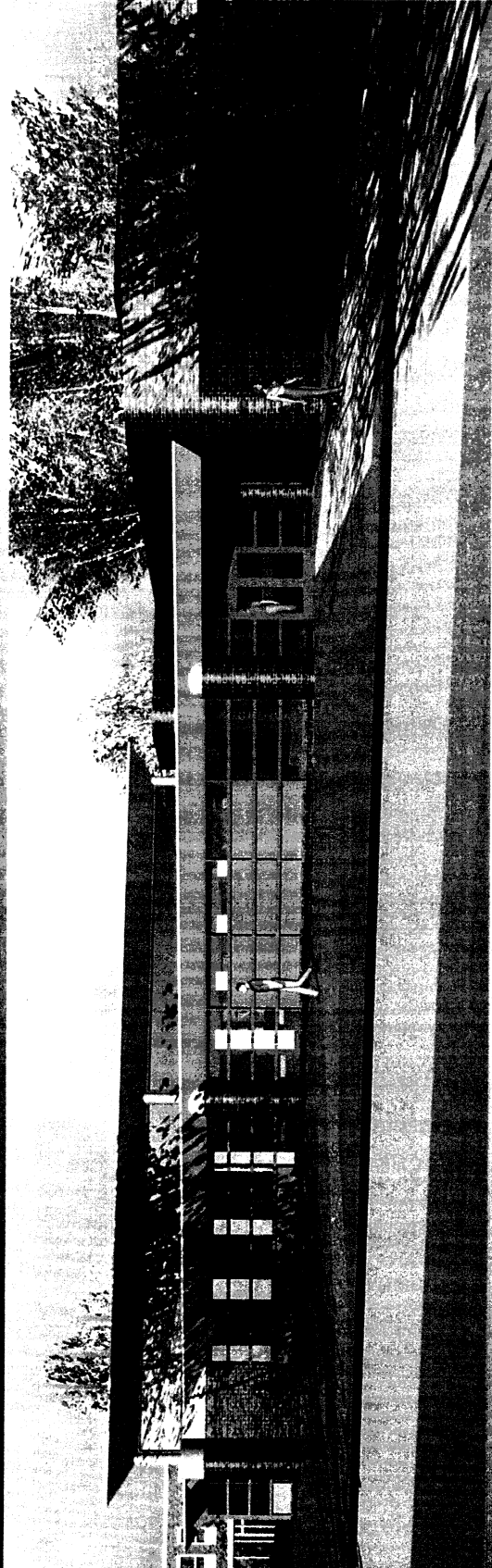
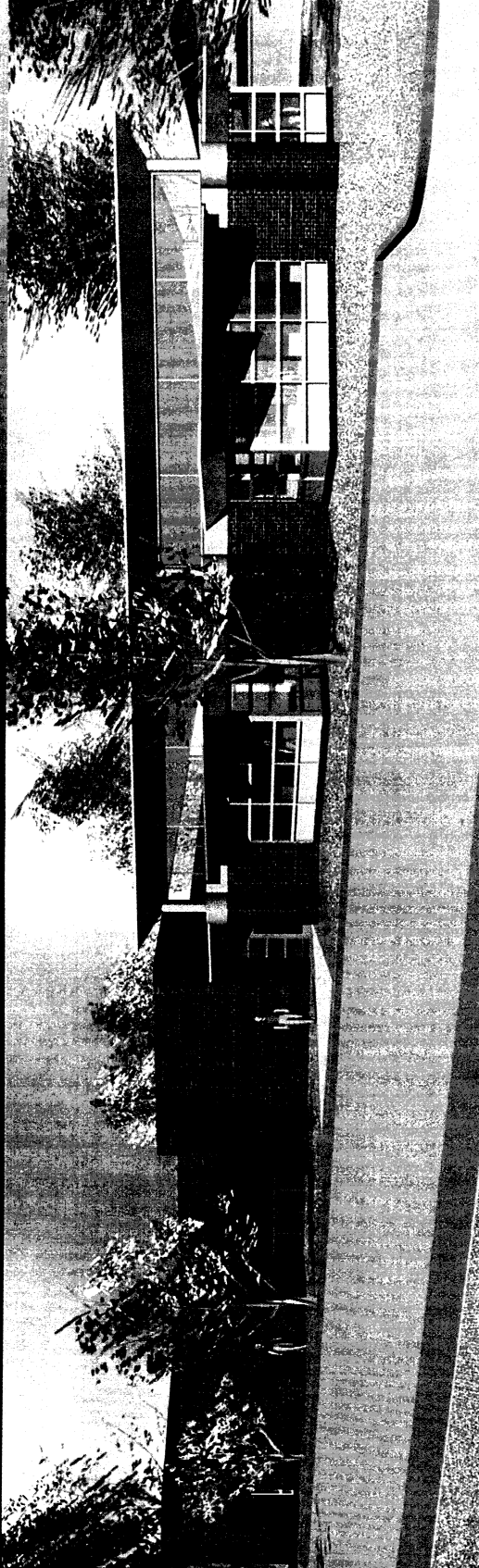
## Issues to be Addressed

- ▲ Expansion
- ▲ Access and Plaza
- ▲ Protection and Entrance
- ▲ Parking

September 13, 2003

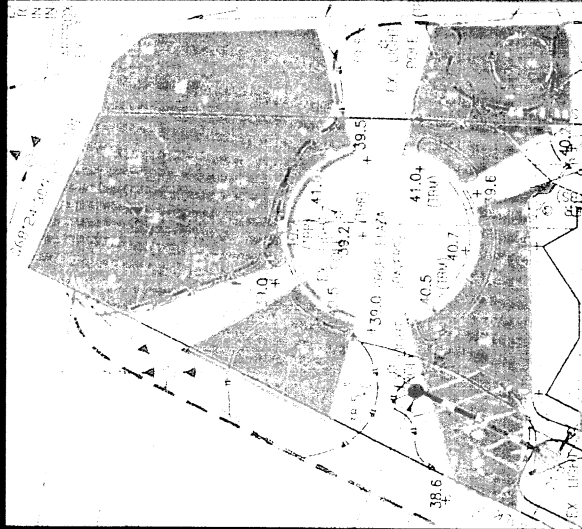
# Duncan Library Expansion

## Building Design



# Duncan Library Expansion

## Open Space and Plaza



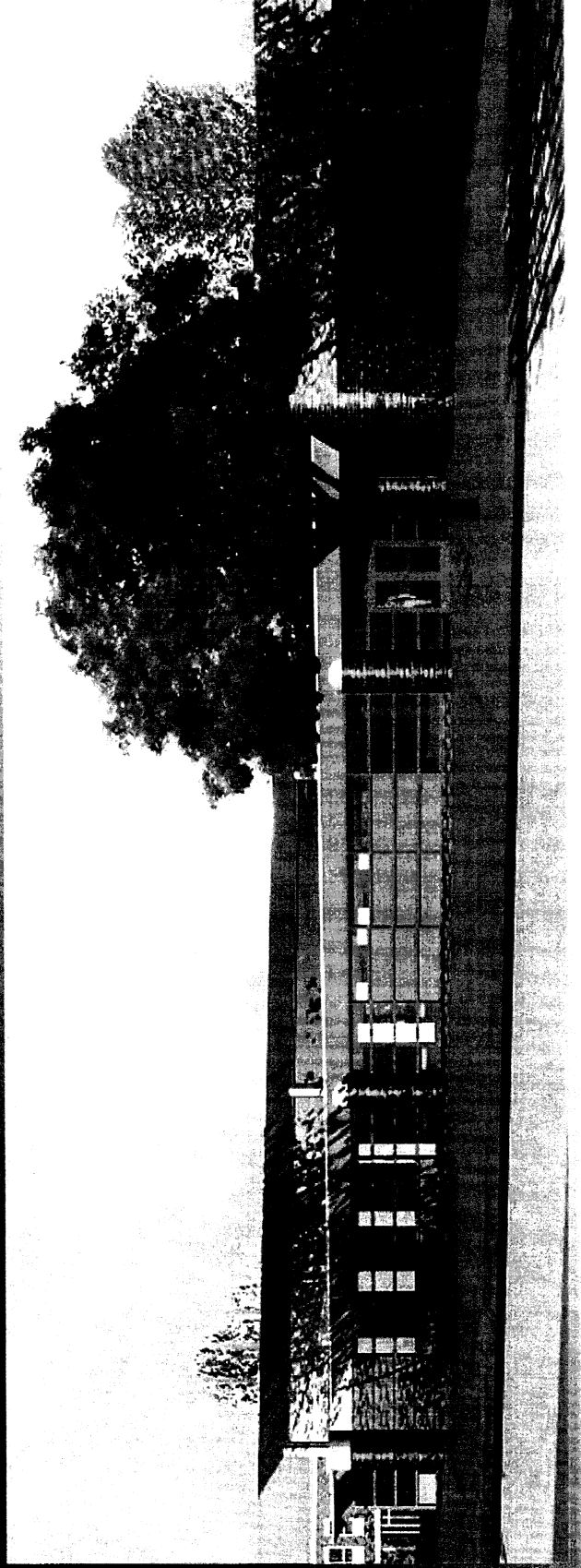
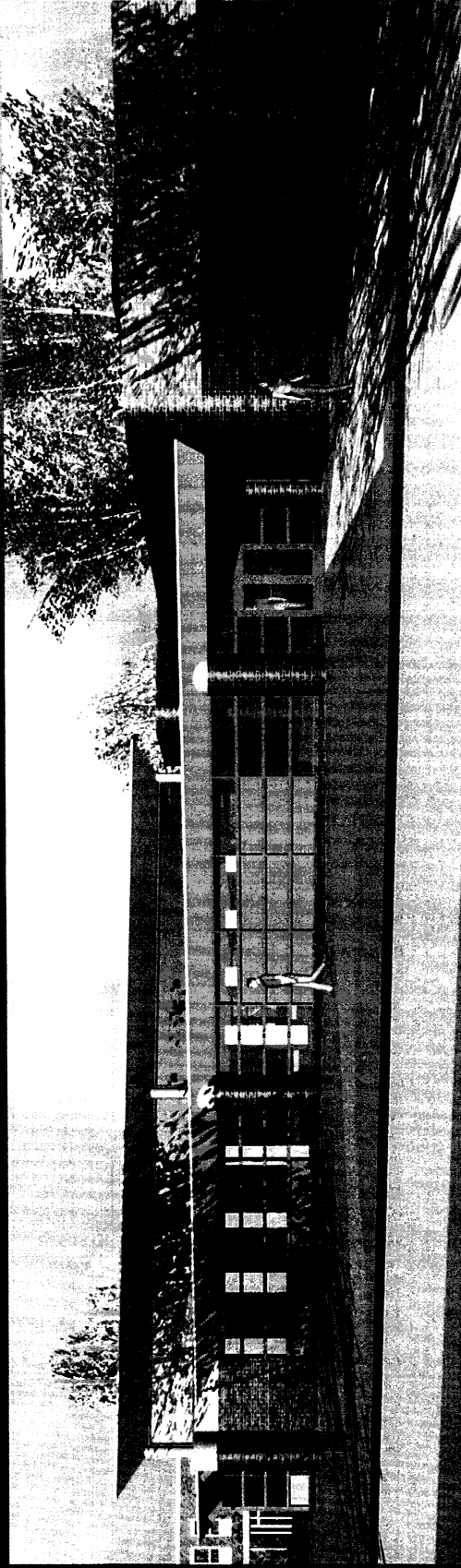
# Duncan Library Expansion



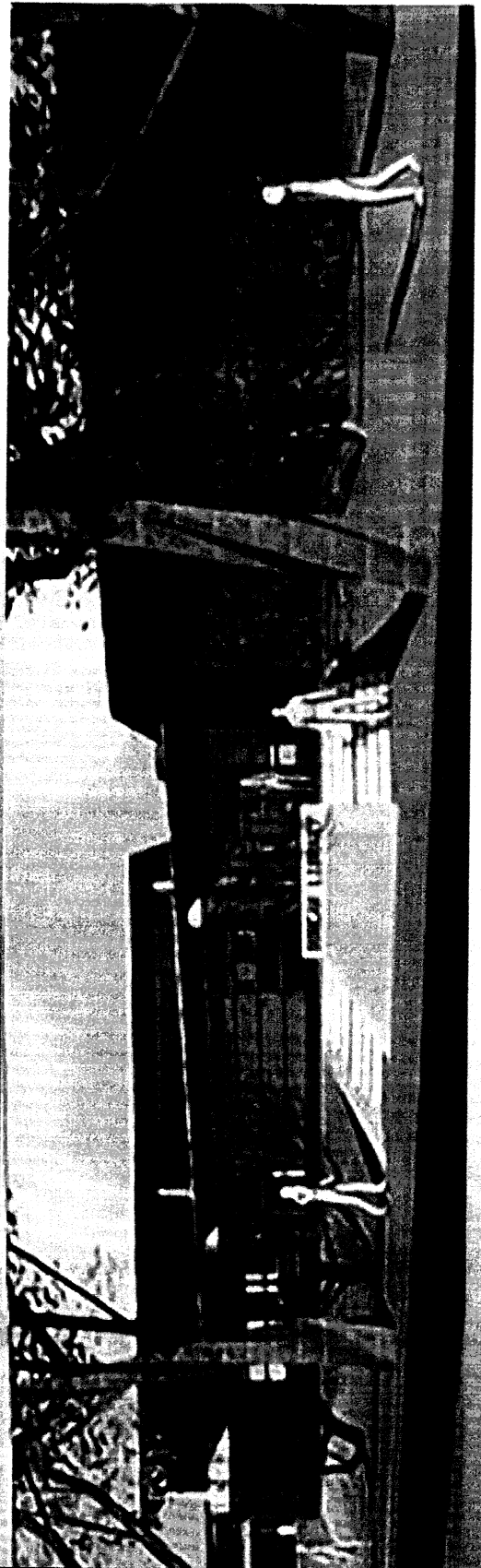
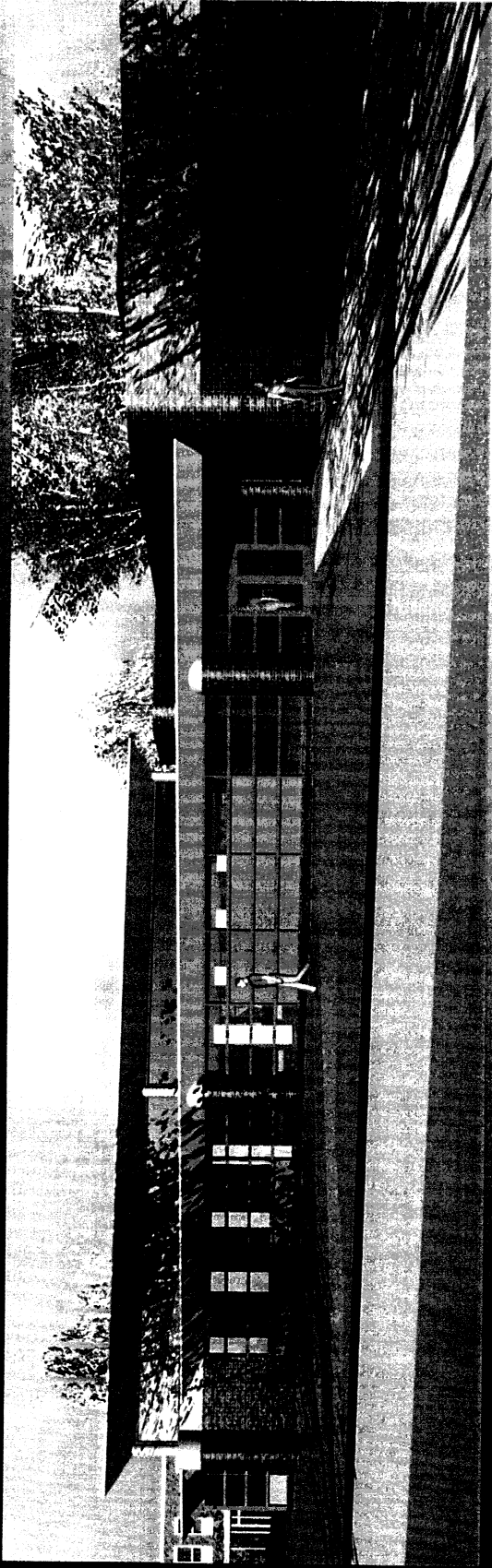
September 13, 2003

# Duncan Library Expansion

## Tree Protection



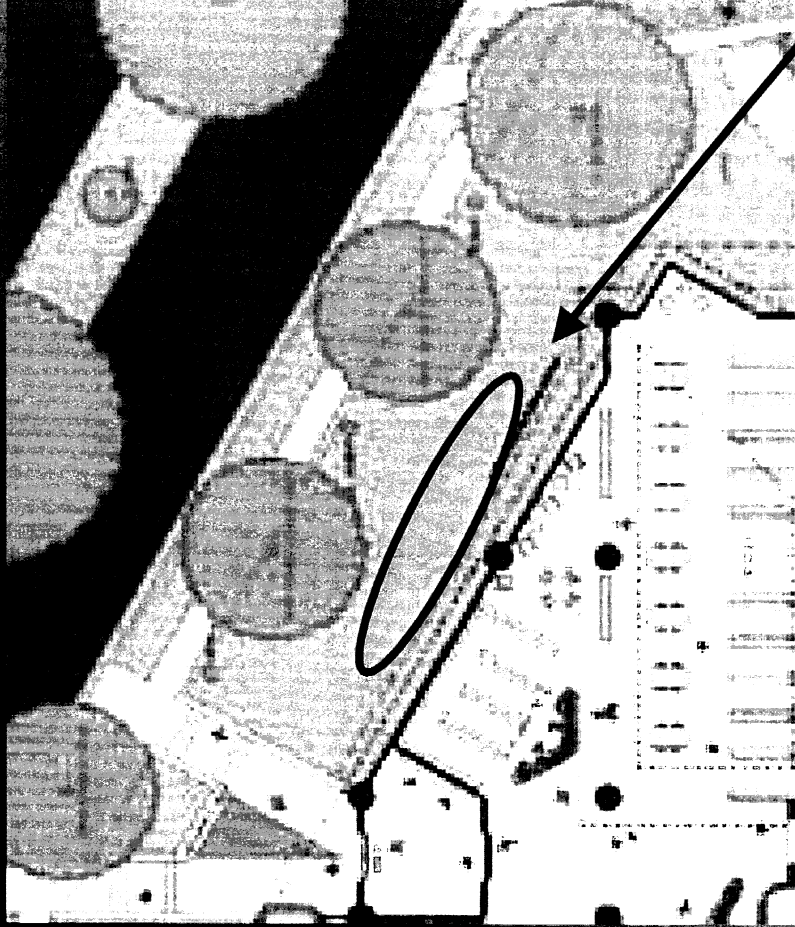
# Duncan Library Expansion





# Duncan Library Expansion

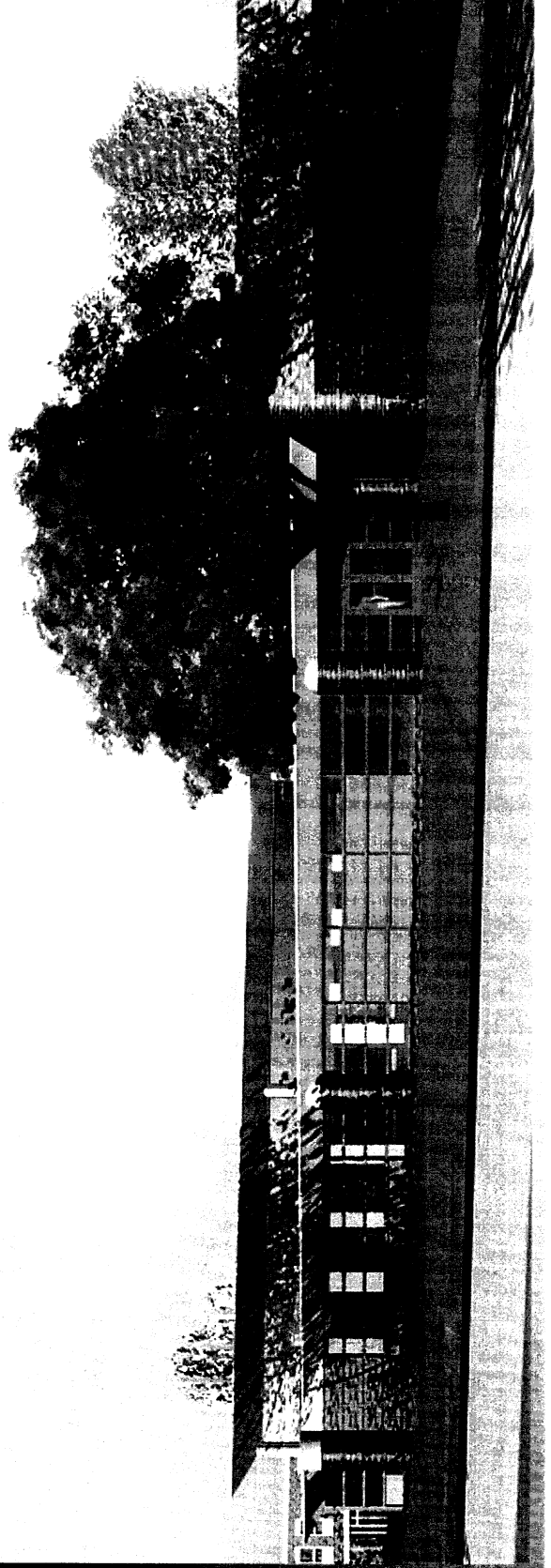
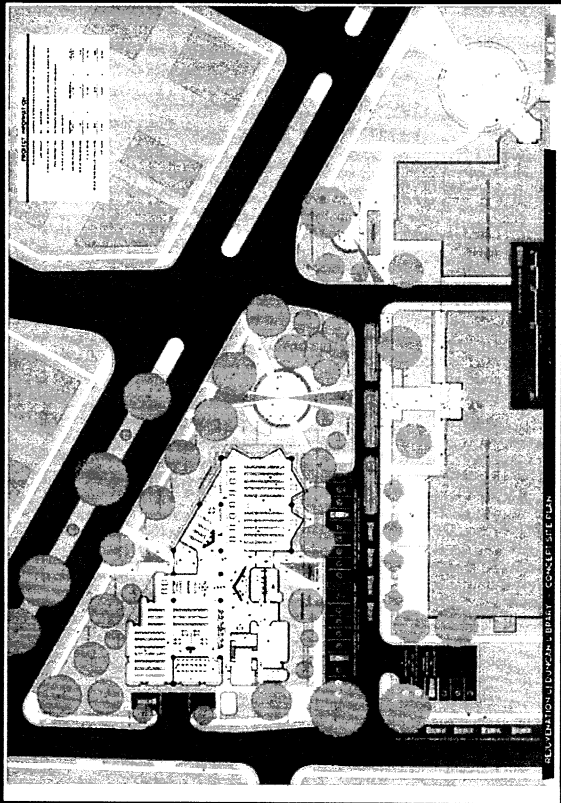
## Bio-Retention



Proposed Bio-Retention Area

September 13, 2003

# Duncan Library Expansion



emailed to Council  
9/11/03  
12  

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9-13-03

**To:** Mayor William Euille  
Honorable Members of City Council  
Phillip Sunderland, City Manager  
Eileen Fogarty, Director, Office of Planning and Zoning

**From:** Amy Slack

**Date:** September 11, 2003

**Subject:** DSUP# 2003-0016, Request to expand the existing James M. Duncan Library and a reduction in parking at 2501 Commonwealth Avenue.

I support the one story expansion of the James M. Duncan Library. I ask Council to approve the request but to removed conditions 3, 4b and 6 from the DSUP, to allow greater flexibility in the final design for the Commonwealth Avenue entrance.

When I consider the amount of money budgeted, the site complications, and the operational costs associated with whichever design is chosen, I think we are getting about the best facility we possibly could. Most of all, I am elated that the library will have an entrance facing onto Commonwealth Avenue.

Over a decade ago, as a new Del Ray resident, I went looking for the neighborhood public library. I couldn't find it. I couldn't find the front door to the school either. The path I needed to take appeared to me like the road to a loading dock or service entrance. It had a certain unkempt, 'back of the house' look about it. I thought then, 'What a bad first impression this is.' I'm sad to say that I haven't been the only person to have that as 'my first impression'.

So now there is this fantastic opportunity to change that impression; a grand, main entrance with a presence on Commonwealth Avenue. I use "grand" rather loosely. What I mean is; we should have distinctive entrances, equal in stature, for all three facilities; the library, the school, and the recreation center. We should create a coordinated campus.

To me, the front door is not always the 'Main' entrance. The 'Main' entrance is the one most people choose to use, usually because it is more convenient. I feel that the library's 'Main' entrance should face Commonwealth Avenue, just like the school and the recreation center do. If we think big enough, I believe we can resolve problems to construct the library entrance so it entices people to walk to it; an invitation to parents and their small children or senior citizens on their daily stroll. An entrance that is broad and barrier free. But to construct it and solve all the logistical elements, I think we need to lift some constraints approved by the Planning Commission. We need the flexibility to choose what is sacrificed, be it a tree or a particular 'look' or we need to spend more money. I'm told that we don't have more money, but if we did, maybe we could have all the competing desires met.

So I tested my opinion at the Del Ray Farmers Market. I estimate that I drew attention to the expansion plan from over 100 people. I used materials from a public hearing and a borrowed copy of the site plan. I tried to be fair and enthusiastic in my presentation. Approximately two thirds of the people had questions or made comments. People responded to the concept design very positively. Most praised the overall appearance; exceptions were few or of limited aspect. Many wanted to know when the construction would begin. And when questioned on their preference, generally people expressed the opinion that 'form' without 'function' was not important to them; they preferred convenient access from the Commonwealth Avenue entrance or if it invited abuse, then the lawn appearance was of questionable value.

It's nice to have my opinion shared by so many others. And it would be great if the Mayor and Council agreed too. I ask for your support when making your decision.

Sincerely,

Amy Slack

emailed directly to CC ✓  
9/11/03



NEONKANB@aol.com  
09/11/2003 05:52 PM

To: jackie.henderson@ci.alexandria.va.us  
cc:  
Subject: 9-13-03 Council Docket Item #12 Concerns

12  

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9-13-03

Greetings! I am including below, and in an attached Word document, the views of the Alexandria Arts Forum concerning item #12 on this Saturday's Public Hearing docket. Thank you.

**ALEXANDRIA ARTS FORUM**

Care of K. A. Brown  
2724 Hickory Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22305  
703-549-5227

11 September 2003

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor and Members of City Council,

Greetings! I would like to address the James M. Duncan, Jr. Branch Library Expansion which is on your Public Hearing docket, item #12, for this Saturday, September 13th. The community is happy to see the expansion going forward, and my comments do not relate to the building, but rather the plaza area planned to the north of the building.

Currently in that area north of the building, along the path from Commonwealth Avenue to the school, there is a sculpture which is in the City's Public Art inventory. Many of you may recall that it was an entry and a stop on the "From Site to Sight" Tour given by the Alexandria Arts Forum this year and previously. It is titled "All Things Come in Threes" and it was built in 1967 as part of the Mt. Vernon Elementary School addition project. The artist/architect who designed it and the school addition is Marlin G. Lord, a long time resident of the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria. Public Art in our City is still relatively rare, and each piece therefore that much more precious.

The Alexandria Arts Forum is concerned that the current plans for the plaza do not show "All Things Come in Threes". The full membership does not start meeting again for the Fall until September 25th, but the executive committee has met and agreed that our concerns need to be brought to your attention. We would like to ensure that this existing piece of Public Art be protected - whether this means retaining it in its current location with the plaza planned to sensitively accommodate it, or if *necessary* (it is the artist's opinion that it is too fragile to move) gently relocating it to an appropriate nearby location. The artist, the art work and the community deserve this respect.

When the Planning Commission voted to approve the SUP, they included staff recommendations in that approval. In the staff report Summary, under Open Space/Plaza, there is included "a condition to refine the design of the plaza, [to] encourage seating areas and decorative materials." Realizing that the design of the plaza will likely already be revisited, if you accept these same conditions, the Forum would be interested in being part of the process that would assist the City in coming to reasonable decisions. We believe that the existing sculpture in its current location would only enhance the design of a plaza, and should be considered a precious gift to the new community space being planned.

Sincerely,

Kathryn A. Brown, Vice President of Advocacy  
Alexandria Arts Forum

PS: I am hoping to be able to speak before you at the Public Hearing, but as I and much of the Arts Forum executive committee was previously committed to presenting local Alexandria arts on Market Square to the visitors attending the Alexandria Festival of the Arts out on King Street, I am not sure if that will be possible. I thank you for your consideration of our views.

cc: Philip Sunderland, City Manager  
Patrick O'Brien, Director of Libraries

Amy Slack, Del Ray Citizens Assoc. Land Use Committee  
Susan Landess, President, Alexandria Arts Forum



Letter to Council 9-03 - All Things at Duncan.doc

# Del Ray Citizens Association

12 ✓  
9-13-03

PO Box 2233

ALEXANDRIA VA 22301

ESTABLISHED 1954

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**To:** Honorable Members of City Council  
Eileen Fogarty, Director, Office of Planning and Zoning

**From:** Justin Wilson, President  
Amy Slack, Land Use committee Co-chair  
Sarah Haut, Land Use committee Co-chair

**Date:** September 10, 2003

**Subject:** DSUP# 2003-0016, Request to expand the existing James M. Duncan Library, with site plan and modification, and a reduction in parking at 2501 Commonwealth Avenue. Applicant: City of Alexandria.

The membership voted unanimously to support the following motion as amended.

We ask Council,

- to support the construction of the library addition,
- to remove conditions from the DSUP requiring the retention of the tree (conditions # 3, 4b),
- and direct staff to work with DRCA and PTA to address the bio-retention area and the library entrance (condition # 6).

A friendly motion to commit \$500.00 (five hundred dollars) for a new tree, payable from the DRCA Tree Fund, was added.

We support the concept design for expansion as presented to the public on June 26, 2003.

James M. Duncan Library is our neighborhood library. We look at it, we walk to it, we read in it, we volunteer at it. Ultimately, we pay for it, and we want to be proud of it.

The concept design portrays the addition as visually open, filled with light: the new entrances as barrier free and inviting. The addition is of compatible scale to and repeats features from the existing library. The site design creates a presence on Commonwealth Avenue for both the library and the Mount Vernon Community School, and integrates elements from the adjacent Rocky Versace Plaza.

In a letter dated September 2, 2003, Land Use committee wrote the Planning Commission to express support for the DSUP with opposition to some conditions. This position was supported by the Executive Board.

In our opinion, the plan before City Council is a testament to the outreach efforts of General Services, and their architect. The result is an integrated design which successfully unites three, separately administered city facilities. It addresses a multitude of competing requests from the adjacent facilities, library patrons and neighbors, the Mount Vernon Community School PTA, and the Del Ray Citizens Association. Finally, it passes examination by the Department of Planning & Zoning with few recommended changes. To accomplish this is a minor marvel.

However, we were disappointed that General Services did not present the final version to our community prior to approval by the Planning Commission. The process of site design necessitated changes to the concept plan. Of these changes, no displays or presentations were made public; no opportunities for the community to critique and suggest ideas.

Without benefit of a new presentation, we lacked a point of reference to compare and fully understand the reasoning for the Planning staff recommendations. We wondered, "How will

these recommendations add value, improve the function, or enhance enjoyment of our library?"

On September 5<sup>th</sup>, the committee co-chair met with a member of Planning staff to discuss staff report recommendations. Staff provided a copy of the site plan for her use over the next several days.

The borrowed site plan and 'powerpoint' illustrations, available at the September 4<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission hearing, were used as part of her public outreach efforts. The efforts were held at the Del Ray Farmers Market on Saturday from 8:00 AM to noon and at the Duncan Library Sunday from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM. The intention was to raise awareness of the library expansion, learn the preferences through discussion, and encourage public participation in the process. An estimated 100 people viewed the materials; several committee and executive board members examined and discussed the site plan as well. The DRCA and PTA meetings, both scheduled for Monday the 8<sup>th</sup>, were promoted as public opportunities to learn more; General Services had agreed to be present on that evening with current design illustrations.

At the DRCA meeting, the Land Use committee brought forth discussion of the conditions, as recommended by the Planning Commission, that determine design options for the Commonwealth Avenue entrance. The committee members felt that these conditions diminish the stature of the entrance, severely hamper alternative problem-solving options, and would create future problems.

The points of discussion were:

- the preservation of the 'main entrance' status to face onto Commonwealth Avenue.
- design restrictions imposed by the requirement to retain a 14" Sophora at the Commonwealth Avenue entrance.
- the Commonwealth Avenue entrance should be designed to allow barrier free access for persons with small children in strollers and ambulatory senior citizens.
- the preservation of the common design elements shared by the entrances of the three facilities.
- the impact of reconfiguration of the bio-retention area;
  - options to address a ground level bio-retention 'ditch' (sic)
  - alternatives to the building foundation exposure
  - the impact on a 22" Sophora tree and the storm drain inlet adjacent to the school plaza.

After discussion, a motion was made from the membership and approved.

We request your support for this position and welcome your questions and comments. Please feel free to contact President Justin Wilson at 703-299 1576 and Co-chairs Amy Slack at 703-549-3412 or Sarah Haut at 703-838-9060.

#12 ✓  
9-13-03

## ALEXANDRIA ARTS FORUM

care of K. A. Brown  
2724 Hickory Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22305

703-549-5227

11 September 2003

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor and Members of City Council,

Greetings! I would like to address the James M. Duncan, Jr. Branch Library Expansion which is on your Public Hearing docket, item #12, for this Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. The community is happy to see the expansion going forward, and my comments do not relate to the building, but rather the plaza area planned to the north of the building.

Currently in that area north of the building, along the path from Commonwealth Avenue to the school, there is a sculpture which is in the City's Public Art inventory. Many of you may recall that it was an entry and a stop on the "From Site to Sight" Tour given by the Alexandria Arts Forum this year and previously. It is titled "All Things Come in Threes" and it was built in 1967 as part of the Mt. Vernon Elementary School addition project. The artist/architect who designed it and the school addition is Marlin G. Lord, a long time resident of the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria. Public Art in our City is still relatively rare, and each piece therefore that much more precious.

The Alexandria Arts Forum is concerned that the current plans for the plaza do not show "All Things Come in Threes". The full membership does not start meeting again for the Fall until September 25<sup>th</sup>, but the executive committee has met and agreed that our concerns need to be brought to your attention. We would like to ensure that this existing piece of Public Art be protected – whether this means retaining it in its current location with the plaza planned to sensitively accommodate it, or if *necessary* (it is the artist's opinion that it is too fragile to move) gently relocating it to an appropriate nearby location. The artist, the art work and the community deserve this respect.

When the Planning Commission voted to approve the SUP, they included staff recommendations in that approval. In the staff report Summary, under Open Space/Plaza, there is included "a condition to refine the design of the plaza, [to] encourage seating areas and decorative materials." Realizing that the design of the plaza will likely already be revisited, if you accept these same conditions, the Forum would be interested in being part of the process that would assist the City in coming to reasonable decisions. We believe that the existing sculpture in its current location would only enhance the design of a plaza, and should be considered a precious gift to the new community space being planned.

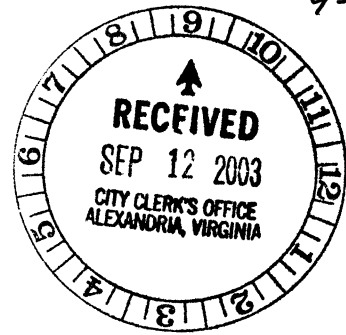
Sincerely,

Kathryn A. Brown, Vice President of Advocacy  
Alexandria Arts Forum

PS: I am hoping to be able to speak before you at the Public Hearing, but as I and much of the Arts Forum executive committee was previously committed to presenting local Alexandria arts on Market Square to the visitors attending the Alexandria Festival of the Arts out on King Street, I am not sure if that will be possible. I thank you for your consideration of our views.

cc: Philip Sunderland, City Manager  
Patrick O'Brien, Director of Libraries  
Amy Slack, Del Ray Citizens Assoc. Land Use Committee  
Susan Landess, President, Alexandria Arts Forum



#12+13 ✓  
9-13-03

September 11, 2003

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

Saving the trees in Alexandria is a major concern of many Alexandria citizens. There are two specific instances that deserve your immediate attention: Duncan Library and Kings Cloister.

I understand that the mature tree in question at the Duncan Library is on city property and the architect and some residents of Del Ray would like the tree removed to better show off the new addition from the street. I am in strong support of the city staff in keeping this tree intact for its beauty, shade, and character it gives to the neighborhood. In addition, destroying mature trees needlessly displays a lack of respect for our environment.

Regarding Kings Cloister, the city government would BE SETTING A PRECEDENT by allowing the homeowner to cut down large trees on his property when he already agreed when purchasing the property to the cluster zoning that meant keeping the trees. What is the point of laws and regulations if we don't abide by them?

We would all appreciate your thoughtful consideration of these matters.

Yours truly,

Ann Kaupp  
longtime resident of Alexandria

emailed to cc 9/11/03 ✓

12:13

9-13-03



"Ann Kaupp"  
<Kaupp.Ann@NMNH.SI.  
EDU>

09/11/2003 02:43 PM

To: <alexmayor@aol.com>, <eileen.fogarty@ci.alexandria.va.us>, <jackie.henderson@ci.alexandria.va.us>, <Ahmacdonald@his.com>  
cc:  
Subject: Trees at Duncan Library and Kings Cloister

September 11, 2003

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

Saving the trees in Alexandria is a major concern of many Alexandria citizens. There are two specific instances that deserve your immediate attention: Duncan Library and Kings Cloister.

I understand that the mature tree in question at the Duncan Library is on city property and the architect and some residents of Del Ray would like the tree removed to better show off the new addition from the street. I am in strong support of the city staff in keeping this tree intact for its beauty, shade, and character it gives to the neighborhood. In addition, destroying mature trees needlessly displays a lack of respect for our environment.

Regarding Kings Cloister, the city government would BE SETTING A PRECEDENT by allowing the homeowner to cut down large trees on his property when he already agreed when purchasing the property to the cluster zoning that meant keeping the trees. What is the point of laws and regulations if we don't abide by them?

We would all appreciate your thoughtful consideration of these matters.

Yours truly,

Ann Kaupp  
longtime resident of Alexandria

emailed to CC 9/11/03

12 & 13  
-----  
9-13-03



DiEpler@aol.com  
09/11/2003 02:41 PM

To: jackie.henderson@ci.alexandria.va.us  
CC:  
Subject: Saving trees in Alexandria

To: Jackie Henderson, City Clerk

I ask that you give a copy of the following letter to every council member.

Thank you,  
Dianne E. Adams

September 11, 2003

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

You have also received the following letter from Ann Kaupp, my neighbor. Since I am in total agreement with her sentiments, I am forwarding the same to signify my strong desire for your positive actions in these matters. Ann writes:

Saving the trees in Alexandria is a major concern of many Alexandria citizens. There are two specific instances that deserve your immediate attention: Duncan Library and Kings Cloister.

I understand that the mature tree in question at the Duncan Library is on city property and the architect and some residents of Del Ray would like the tree removed to better show off the new addition from the street. I am in strong support of the city staff in keeping this tree intact for its beauty, shade, and character it gives to the neighborhood. In addition, destroying mature trees needlessly displays a lack of respect for our environment.

Regarding Kings Cloister, the city government would BE SETTING A PRECEDENT by allowing the homeowner to cut down large trees on his property when he already agreed when purchasing the property to the cluster zoning that meant keeping the trees. What is the point of laws and regulations if we don't abide by them?

We would all appreciate your thoughtful consideration of these matters.

Yours truly,

Ann Kaupp  
longtime resident of Alexandria  
In mutual agreement,

Dianne E. Adams  
501 Slaters Lane #422  
Alexandria, VA 22314