


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 8, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A GRANT APPLICATION AND RESOLUTION TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FOR THE TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM, TO PARTIALLY FUND THE RESTORATION OF THE GADSBY'S TAVERN MUSEUM ICE WELL

ISSUE: Consideration of a grant application to partially fund the estimated \$400,000 costs of restoration of the Gadsby's Tavern Museum Ice Well, and the creation of an expanded lower level observation area.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Consider whether or not to submit a grant application (due by November 1 to the Commonwealth Transportation Board), requesting \$200,000 in federal Transportation Enhancement Program grant funding;
- (2) If Council decides to proceed, approve the attached resolution; and
- (3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: In 1991 Congress introduced the Transportation Enhancement Program, which requires each state to set aside 10 percent of its Surface Transportation Program funds for transportation enhancement projects. This program offers broad opportunities on a competitive funding basis and federal funding for creative projects that integrate transportation into our communities and environment. The legislation designated 12 activities related to surface transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and safety programs, scenic and historic highway programs, landscaping and scenic beautification, historic preservation and environmental mitigation. This grant program is meant to improve non-motorized transportation, enhance the public's traveling experience, revitalize communities, and improve the quality of life. Although the Commonwealth of Virginia is facing major transportation funding issues, it is maintaining this niche grant program which is aimed at enhancement of primary transportation modes rather than the expansion of those primary modes. As a result, the City is faced with the ironic situation of considering whether or not to request transportation

grant funds for a non-transportation project at a time when our core transportation funds are being substantially cut by the State. The City is not applying this year under this grant program for a bike trail grant, as staff has a major prior grant it is working on implementing, as well as they did not have a viable candidate project and match to put forward.

Gadsby's Tavern Museum consists of two buildings, the 1785 tavern and 1792 City Tavern, both built by tavern keeper and entrepreneur John Wise. Taverns and hotels inherently relate to the history of surface transportation because they were built to provide weary travelers with food and lodging. A unique feature of the City Tavern was the installation of an adjoining subterranean ice well which provided the tavern with a ready supply of ice. As noted in the Alexandria Common Council's minutes, John Wise was given permission to build an ice well under Cameron Street in 1793.

Gadsby's Tavern Museum's ice well is a unique artifact from the beginning of the hospitality and travel industry, providing a cutting-edge amenity to guests. Linked directly to the hotel basement by a brick-walled and vaulted tunnel, the ice well was also accessed by the tavern staff through a small hatch at the street level.

The goals of the extensive ice well restoration, which is estimated to cost \$400,000, are to preserve the unique built structure, and to improve the visitor's experience with the ice well. The ice well was originally restored in the early 1970's and made visible to the public in conjunction with the restoration of Gadsby's Tavern Museum. Time and the environment have taken their toll on this historic ice well feature. Though perhaps not as striking as the imposing buildings to which it is attached, the ice well is both an important part of Alexandria's historic built environment, and a rare survivor in an urban setting, and it provides an evocative glimpse into the City's commercial and social history. The design concept is to enlarge the lower level observation area by adding a small subsurface amphitheatre, as well as by improving the stairway access. Improved lighting of the subsurface ice well is planned as well as new signage and historic text. The estimated \$400,000 costs relate primarily to the amphitheatre and stairway construction, which has to be carefully undertaken, as those elements would be immediately adjacent to historic structures.

In recognition of the limitations on the City's funding of CIP projects, it is proposed that this project only utilize private and grant funds and not City funds. If private and grant funds raised do not total \$400,000, then the project will be scaled back to fit only the funds that are available. City project management costs of City staff would also need to be covered by grants and private fund raising.

FISCAL IMPACT: This grant requires a 20 percent match (\$40,000), of non-federal funds through donated materials and services, cash, or volunteer labor. A cash match will be raised by the Gadsby's Tavern Museum Society, the 501(c)(3) friend's organization of Gadsby's Tavern Museum, and through special programs sponsored by Gadsby's Tavern Museum. No City funds will be used for this project.

If this \$200,000 in grant funds are awarded, Gadsby's Tavern Museum will have a total of \$250,000 of the \$400,000 estimated likely needed for construction of the ice well renovation to

commence. To date \$50,000 in non-City funds has been raised. It will be the Office of Historic Alexandria's responsibility to raise the remaining funds. If the \$400,000 total estimated for this project cannot be raised (no City funds are contemplated), then the project would be rescoped to fit within available funds.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1. Grant Resolution

Attachment 2. Conceptual Overview Graphic

STAFF:

Lance Mallamo, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

Liz Williams, Assistant Director, Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Office of Historic Alexandria

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Commonwealth Transportation Board construction allocation procedures, it is necessary that a request by resolution be received from the local government or state agency in order that the Virginia Department of Transportation program an enhancement project in the City of Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, the restoration of the ice well at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Alexandria's five-star hotel of the 18th century, will enhance the hospitality story of this important landmark; and

WHEREAS, the ice well is both an important part of Alexandria's historic built environment and a rare survivor in an urban setting, providing an evocative glimpse into the City's commercial and social history; and

WHEREAS, the Gadsby's Tavern Museum ice well is located at an active intersection for foot traffic and is an important attraction for the on-road bikeway; and

WHEREAS, this project is compatible with the City of Alexandria's interests and goals related to historic preservation and supports the economic vitality of our community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Alexandria, requests the Commonwealth Transportation Board to establish a project for the restoration of the Gadsby's Tavern Museum ice well;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Gadsby's Tavern Museum and its friends group, the Gadsby's Tavern Museum Society, hereby agree to ensure a minimum 20 percent of the total cost for planning and design, right of way, and construction of this project, and that, if Gadsby's Tavern Museum subsequently elects to cancel this project, Gadsby's Tavern Museum hereby agrees to reimburse the Virginia Department of Transportation for the total amount of costs expended by the Department through the date the Department is notified of such cancellation.

ADOPTED: October 14, 2008

WILLIAM D. EUILLE, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Jackie Henderson, CMC City Clerk

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Architects, AIA**
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Alexandria, VA 22301
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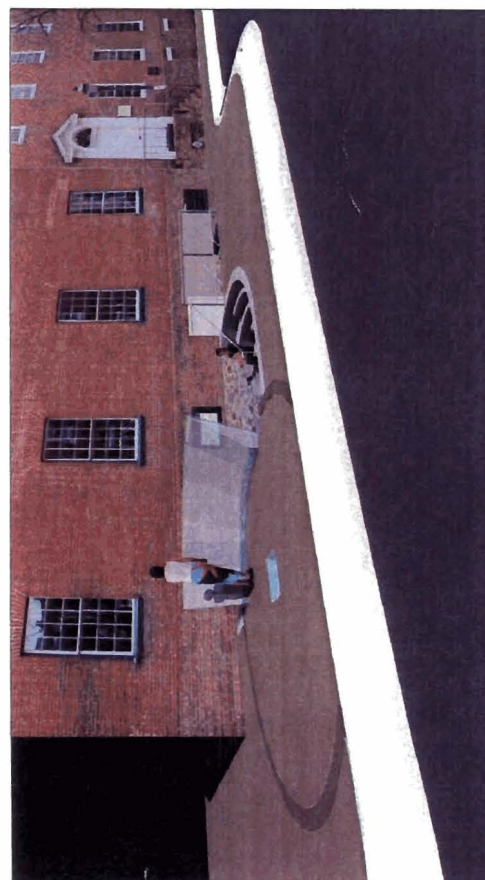
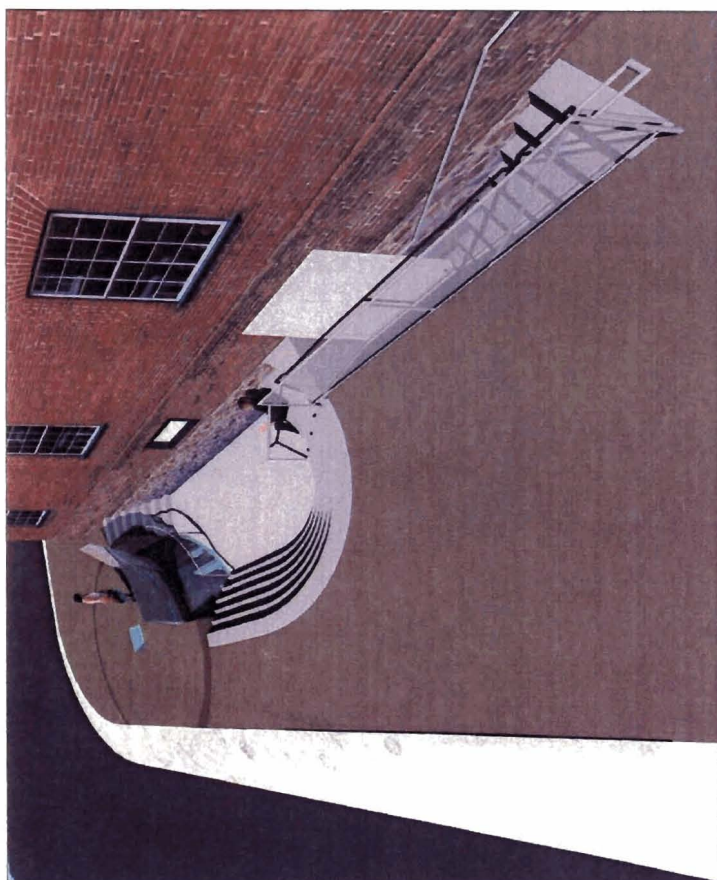
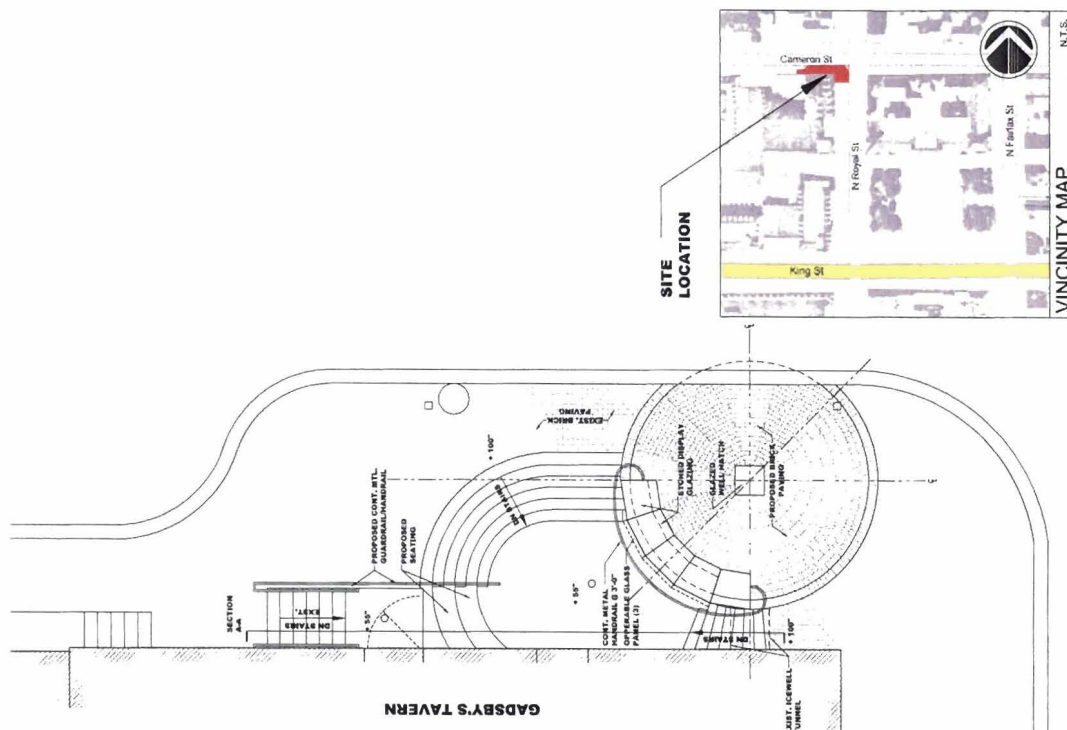
**BELLArchitects,
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GADSBY'S TAVERN ICE WELL
CONCEPTUAL STUDY
134 N. Royal Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Revised Concept

RECEIVED BY:	JOB NUMBER:
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DATE:	DRAWN BY:
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RESOLUTION NO. 2296

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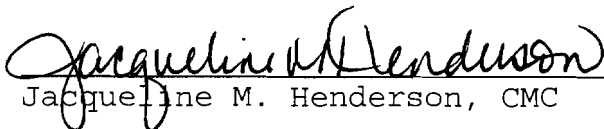
ADOPTED: October 14, 2008



WILLIAM D. EUILLE

MAYOR

ATTEST:



Jacqueline M. Henderson, CMC City Clerk