

Docket Item #9  
BAR Case #2003-0240

BAR Meeting  
February 4, 2003

**ISSUE:** Construction of 79 new townhouses

**APPLICANT:** Potomac Greens Associates, LLC and Craftmark Homes

**LOCATION:** Potomac Yard - Landbay A, Tax Map 035.02-02-01

**ZONE:** CDD/Coordinated Development District

---

**BOARD ACTION, DECEMBER 17, 2003:** On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Ms. Quill the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 6-0.

**REASON:** The Board agreed with the Staff analysis and believed that there were a number of design issues that needed to be addressed in any restudy. These included:

**Building Materials**

- Material of the front doors which the Board indicated should be wood;
- Material of the garage doors. The Board indicated that those garage doors which were visible from the public right-of-way should be wood core doors while the other garage doors could be embossed metal proposed by the applicant;
- Because of the visibility of the development from the Parkway, the highest quality roofing materials should be used; and,
- Solid core PVC shutters that are one half the width of a window and are hinged and operable are acceptable.

**Design Issues**

- Lot #'s 203 & 210 - there is a mix of window types; the second and third floor windows should be aligned; fake windows are not appropriate;
- Lot #'s 204 & 205 - door entry detailing needs to be further refined;
- Lot #'s 131, 200 & 212 - these four story building need a proper base, they appear to be top heavy; Mr. Crigler indicated that this could be dealt with by recessing every 5<sup>th</sup> row of brick coursing;
- House type R2S - four different window types are used; this unit type needs more work on the composition of the rear elevation;
- Additional work should be done to try to achieve symmetry for the rear elevations of the Lessard designed townhouses;
- For those townhouses that are exact twins of each other and are next to each other, additional differentiation between the townhouses is needed. For example, this situation occurs for lot #'s 73 & 74; it was suggested that downspouts could be used to establish

- such a differentiation;
- Lot #25 and the rest of the elevations that changed from Italianate revival – no shutters are proposed on the side and this creates an awkward situation; the original townhouse design should be retained; and,
  - The dormers on all of the Pinnacle designed townhouses appear to be too close to the cornice line, the dormers should be raised somewhat above the cornice line or they could be made larger.

#### **Administrative Issues**

- The Board would like a new set of complete drawings for the next public hearing. Mr. Rak indicated that a complete set of drawings at 11 x 17 would be supplied to the members;
- Grant BAR staff administrative approval for minor revisions to the Certificate of Appropriateness. These changes include swapping the direction of doors; changing window types (such as switching from 2-over-2 panes to 1-over-1 panes) and switching approved color schemes; and,
- Delete Staff condition #5, That the bays on the rear elevations not encroach into the emergency vehicle easement of the rear alleys as redundant to DSUP condition #84 g.

**SPEAKERS:** Jonathan Rak, attorney, McGuire Woods, spoke in support  
Greg Shron, EYA, spoke in support  
Jack McLaurin, Lessard Architectural Group, spoke in support  
Don Crigler, Pinnacle Architecture, spoke in support

**BOARD ACTION, NOVEMBER 5, 2003:** On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Ms. Neihardt the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 7-0.

**REASON:** The Board believed that further attention should be paid to the rears of the townhouses. Dr. Fitzgerald cited the drawings from the Lessard Architectural Group which he said had asymmetrical rear elevations and the dormers were not centered. Ms. Quill said that this development will set a precedent for what happens to residential buildings throughout Potomac Yard as well as the rest of the city. Mr. Wheeler said that the HVAC units should not be expressed in the fenestration of buildings. Mr. Smeallie said that the view corridors down the alleyways should reflect design quality. Members agreed that high quality materials should be used throughout the development and that the front doors should be wood and that the shutters should be hinged and operable. Both Mr. Keleher and Ms. Neihardt said that the material that had been presented was overwhelming and that a special meeting was needed to further understand the project.

**SPEAKERS:** Jonathan Rak, attorney, McGuire Woods, spoke in support  
Robert Youngentob, EYA, spoke in support  
Jack McLaurin, Lessard Architectural Group, spoke in support  
Sean McCabe, National Park Service, spoke about landscaping issues  
Don Crigler, Pinnacle Architecture, spoke in support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the project subject to the conditions and drawing revisions as outline below.

Update:

At the public hearing of December 17, 2003, the Board made a number of specific design suggestions with regard to the various units within the townhouse development. The applicant has endeavored to address each of these comments. Staff has outlined the applicant's responses to each of the concerns noted by the Board at the most recent public hearing and has noted a number of relatively minor concerns and/or discrepancies on the new set of drawings. In the opinion of Staff, the design of the townhouses is acceptable if the revisions outline below are made.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

"To build within the Old and Historic Alexandria District 79 townhouses as shown on the supporting materials. The townhouses are part of a larger development subject to the requirements of DSUP 2002-0026."

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of 79 townhouses to be constructed on Potomac Yards which are within the boundaries of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. This development is named Potomac Greens.

Members should understand that this project is being developed by two different developers with two different architectural teams. Because of this, two separate sets of architectural drawings have been provided. However, there is no single point of differentiation between the two teams and the townhouses of one team are often times directly abutting those of the other team. Each set of drawings has a key plan which must be used in conjunction with the elevations in order to understand the context of any individual townhouse.

In May 2003, the Planning Commission and City Council approved DSUP2002-0026 for the construction of 227 townhomes within Potomac Greens, the first of 9 parcels within the Potomac Yard CDD-Coordinated Development District to be redeveloped. The CDD zone and Guidelines were adopted by Council in 1999 after nearly two years of planning efforts and numerous meetings with adjoining residents and Civic Associations. The intent of the Potomac Yard Guidelines and Concept Plan is to create a street grid network similar to Old Town and Del Ray that provides high-quality urban and architectural design, pedestrian-oriented streets and sidewalks, high-quality useable open space and parks, ultimately redeveloping Potomac Yard to be compatible with the fabric of the adjoining neighborhoods.

The Potomac Greens site is an approximately 34-acre parcel located on a visually prominent portion of Potomac Yard, situated north of Slaters Lane and the existing Old Town Greens townhouse development, and between the Metrorail tracks to the west and the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the east.

### **Building Materials**

With regard to building materials to be throughout the project, the opinion of Staff has not changed during the last two hearings. At the December 17<sup>th</sup> public hearing, the Board agreed with the Staff and noted the following:

- Material of the front doors should be wood;
- Material of the garage doors. Those garage doors which are visible from the public right-of-way should be wood core doors while the other garage doors could be embossed metal proposed by the applicant;
- Because of the visibility of the development from the Parkway, roofing materials should be standing seam metal, slate or faux slate; and,
- Solid core PVC shutters that are one half the width of a window and are hinged and operable are acceptable.

### **Design Issues**

- Lot #'s 203 & 210 - there is a mix of window types; the second and third floor windows should be aligned; fake windows are not appropriate.

These issues have been addressed and, in the opinion of Staff, the changes are appropriate.

- Lot #'s 204 & 205 - door entry detailing needs to be further refined.

The current entry design is acceptable.

- Lot #'s 131, 200 & 212 - these four story building need a proper base, they appear to be top heavy; Mr. Crigler indicated that this could be dealt with by recessing every 5<sup>th</sup> row of brick coursing.

The base of these townhouses has been revised and recessed brick coursing is proposed.

- House type R2S - four different window types are used; this unit type needs more work on the composition of the rear elevation.

The windows types and the rear elevation of this type of unit has been redesigned to address the concerns of the Board.

- Additional work should be done to try to achieve symmetry for the rear elevations of the Lessard designed townhouses.

The rear elevations have been revised to present a more symmetrical appearance.

- For those townhouses that are exact twins of each other and are next to each other, additional differentiation between the townhouses is needed. For example, this situation occurs for lot #'s 73 & 74; it was suggested that downspouts could be used to establish such a differentiation.

Downspouts have been added to the elevations to create a differentiation between these identical unit types.

- Lot #25 and the rest of the elevations that changed from Italianate revival – no shutters are proposed on the side and this creates an awkward situation; the original townhouse design should be retained.

The side elevation now includes shutters to reflect the front facade. This revision is acceptable, in the opinion of Staff.

- The dormers on all of the Pinnacle designed townhouses appear to be too close to the cornice line, the dormers should be raised somewhat above the cornice line or they could be made larger.

The dormers have been slightly relocated to address this concern.

### **Additional Staff design concerns**

In addition to the design issues identified by the Board at the public hearing of December 17<sup>th</sup>, Staff has a number of additional concerns based upon review of the latest design drawings that have been submitted.

- Rear decks. The *Design Guidelines* recommend that wood decks be either painted or stained. The drawings do not indicate whether this is proposed. Therefore, Staff recommends that the rear decks be either painted or stained with an opaque stain.
- Unit #'s 14, 73, 74, & 75. The material of the roof of the projecting bay should be specified. In the opinion of Staff, a standing seam metal roof is appropriate.
- Unit #'s 12, 23, 24, 30, 31, 37, 142, 145, 150, & 157. Roof overhangs and cornice returns. In a number of instances, cornice returns are onto an adjacent unit. This is not permitted without a cross access easement from the adjacent property owner both for liability from the original building and in order to permit maintenance of such a return.
- Unit #'s 22 & 23, 86 & 87. Roof height. These two identical units have differing roof heights. The ground plain should be adjusted so that they have identical heights.
- Unit #'s 27, 73, 74, 75, 132, 133, 213, & 214. Materials of rear elevations. As noted above, the materials of the rear elevations of the units visible from the public right-of-way should match the front. The rear elevation of these units should be brick to match the front.
- Unit #75. Entrance door proportions. The cornice and surround shown on the previous iteration of the drawings should be restored.
- Unit #78. Clarify whether this is a gable or gambrel roof. Consideration should also be given to realigning the false windows. Specifically, all four floors should have the false windows and in order to accomplish this the false windows should be shifted to the south somewhat.
- Unit #'s 88 & 89, 149 & 150. The entrance doors on unit #'s 88 & 150 should be flipped so that it is next to the entrance doors for unit #'s 89 & 149 as shown on the previous iteration of the drawings.
- Unit #'s 91, 93, 94, 95, 152, 200, & 212. Soldier courses are not acceptable for either belt courses or watertables. One-quarter width projecting bricks should be used for belt courses and proper watertable bricks should be used for watertables.

- Unit #'s 93, 94, & 152. The hood above the second floor center window should be eliminated and the second and third floor center windows should be revised as shown in the previous iteration of the drawings.
- Unit #95. Window openings on the east elevation are less than 3' from the property line. Either eliminate these openings and replace with blind windows or adjust property line so that window is not within 3'.
- Unit #129. The substantial height of this unit compared to the adjacent unit #130 should be ameliorated by the appearance of fenestration (e.g. blind windows).
- Unit #143. The first floor fenestration should be revised to include a door/ false window/false bay window in the center of the main section of the house to maintain uniform symmetry.
- Unit #'s 200, & 212. The proportions of the entry door should be revised to reflect the previous iteration of drawings.

### **Drawing revisions**

Staff also believes that a number of relatively minor revisions should be made to the latest set of drawings to more accurately depict the project. These include:

- Footprints of the townhouses should be shown below the elevation drawings to illustrate the recesses and projections of the various units.
- On some drawings the front and rear dormers are not shown on the side elevations. The dormers should be shown so that an accurate depiction of the units is achieved. This is the case with unit #'s 24, 31, & 37.
- Unit #'s 71, 73, 78, 129, 132, 206, & 209. Depiction of adjacent units beyond the side elevation should be drawn to indicate height and/or footprint project in relationship to the unit depicted.
- Drawing label. It appears that unit #135? is not labeled. This unit should be hardlined and depicted.
- Unit #157. There appears to be a drafting error with this unit.

### **Administrative Issues**

- Grant BAR staff administrative approval for minor revisions to the Certificate of Appropriateness. These changes include swapping the direction of doors; changing window types (such as switching from 2-over-2 panes to 1-over-1 panes) and switching approved color schemes;