

Docket Item #17
BAR CASE #2004-0140

BAR Meeting
August 18, 2004

ISSUE: New multi-family residential & retail building

APPLICANT: Washington Real Estate Investment Trust

LOCATION: 806-828 S Columbus Street and 712-728 Jefferson Street

ZONE: CRMU-L/Commercial

BOARD ACTION, JUNE 18, 2003: Ms. Quill recused herself from participating in this docket item. On a motion by Mr. Keleher, seconded by Mr. Smeallie the Board approved the Staff recommendation which was:

1. Approval of the conceptual design of the building; and,
2. Approval of the waiver of the vision clearance.

The vote on the motion was 4-0.

REASON: The Board agreed with the Staff analysis that the redesign had been responsive to the concerns of both the Staff and the Board at the last public hearing. The Board complimented the architects and said that they had been very responsive and that the lack of public opposition showed how well they had responded to the concerns of the community.

SPEAKER: Lee Quill, Cunningham + Quill, project architect, spoke in support

BOARD ACTION, MAY 21, 2003: The Board combined the discussion of docket item #'s 9 & 10. On a motion by Mr. Wheeler, seconded by Ms. Neihardt the Board voted to defer the project for restudy.

The vote on the motion was 6-0.

REASON: Mr. Farnar and Mr. Smith gave a PowerPoint overview of the Staff concerns. The Board agreed with the Staff analysis. Mr. Quill made a lengthy presentation that described the reasoning behind the present design. The Board was supportive of the project and believed that it complied with the Washington Street Standards and the *Design Guidelines*. The Board agreed that the proposed building was appropriate in mass, scale and architectural character, but that additional design attention should be paid to the fourth floor section and that the easternmost part of the building on Jefferson Street should be lowered in height.

SPEAKERS: Lee Quill, Cunningham + Quill, project architect, described the design process up to the current proposal

Sean McCabe, National Park Service, George Washington Memorial Parkway, spoke in support of Staff recommendations

Carolyn Merck, President, Old Town Civic Association, spoke concerning the project

Murney Keleher, representing the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, spoke concerning HARC's concerns about the proposed project

Poul Hertel, former member, Washington Street Task Force, spoke regarding the project's failure to comply with the Washington Street Standards

Chris Faranetta, 725 South Columbus Street, spoke about issues associated with the construction of the project

Maureen Dugan, contract-purchaser 816 Green Street, spoke about concerns associated with the project

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the deferral for restudy of the following project elements:

1. Change of the roof material of the center entry section to slate or faux slate;
2. Consider painting the brick of the center entry section a contrasting color;
3. The projecting first floor bay on the South Columbus Street facade needs further design consideration;
4. Restore the transom on the easternmost building on Green Street;
5. Enlarge the storefront on the easternmost building on Jefferson Street;
6. Detailing of the garage entrance; and,
7. Details of the metal fencing in front of the Green Street English basement apartments and for the garden fencing along South Columbus Street.

UPDATE:

At the public hearing of June 18, 2003, the Board conceptually approved the design of the proposed new residential and retail building at 806-828 S. Columbus Street and 712-728 Jefferson Street. The project is now back before the Board for approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness to allow construction of the building. Since the original conceptual approval of the design of the building, the project architects have continued to refine the design and there are a number of small changes that have been made. This report will highlight those changes.

DESIGN REVISIONS

Columbus Street Elevation

The center entrance section has been somewhat simplified and the proposed color has been changed. In the 2003 proposal the second level windows had arches above the lintels and a brick beltcourse was proposed between the second and third levels. The arches above the windows have been eliminated and replaced with lintels with keystones. The beltcourse has been removed. The color has been changed from a red brick to a brick with a more brownish hue. The base of the building has also been revised. The 2003 proposal portrayed a plain brick base. The current proposal illustrates a rusticated base with every fifth row of brick recessed. In the opinion of Staff, the current design proposal is acceptable. The revisions to the Colonial Revival design vocabulary create a center section that somewhat differentiates it from the rest of building mass.

In the bay immediately to the north of the entranceway, a new door has been added replacing a window. Staff believes that this door contributes to the illusion that the building is composed of a series of townhouse-like elements.

Staff does have concerns regarding several elements of this elevation. First, one of the design principles that has guided the overall composition of this elevation was to divide the facade into a series of separate townhouse-like elements so that it reflected the character of the immediately surrounding area. While in large measure this has been accomplished, Staff is concerned that the use of standing seam metal roof for all of the gable roofs along South Columbus Street creates a homogenous feeling that detracts from the intended individual townhouse vocabulary. Staff suggests that the roofing material for the center entry section be reconsidered and that slate or a

faux slate roof material be installed on this section to create visually separate element.

Second, Staff notes the change in brick color of the center entry section, but finds the change quite subtle. Staff believes that additional differentiation would be achieved if this entry section were to be of painted brick. Specifically, Staff believes that painting this center section a yellow color would contribute to the elegance of the revised facade.

Finally, Staff has concerns about the one story bay section immediately to the south of the entrance. Visually, the base of this bay section appears to be inadequate to support the bay above; it is almost as if the bottom of the bay had been sunk into the ground. To Staff this is a disconcerting element and further attention should be given to the portion of the elevation.

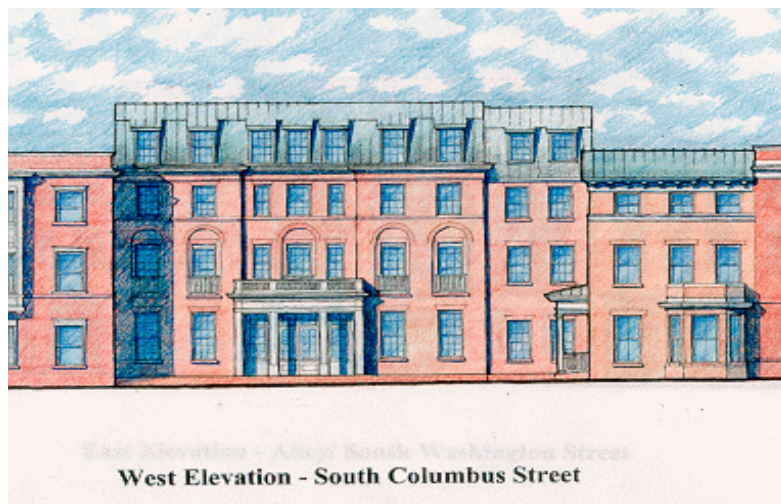


Figure 1 Entry section from 2003 approved concept drawing



Figure 2 Entry section from 2004 Certificate of Appropriateness drawing

Green Street Elevation

In the conceptual approval drawings, the westernmost townhouse element had an entry door with a transom and sidelights. In the current iteration, the sidelights have been eliminated. For the townhouse element immediately to the east an elliptical fanlight at the entry has been removed and replaced with a multi-light rectangular transom. Additionally, a transom above the entry at the easternmost element has been removed. In the opinion of Staff, the elimination of this transom is unfortunate. It creates a somewhat anomalous situation where the head of the doorway is considerably below the window lintel. Staff believes that this transom should be restored to that depicted on the conceptual approval drawing set.

Jefferson Street Elevation

The center section of this elevation has been lowered somewhat and the plain cornice has been replaced with a dentiled cornice. At the same time, the height of the westernmost element has been raised slightly. The storefront doors have been somewhat realigned. These changes are acceptable. In addition, Staff anticipates that there will be further revisions to the retail elements of this elevation as the retail spaces are rented to tenants.

The size of the retail storefront on the easternmost building appears to have been reduced somewhat in height as well as substantially reducing the size of the beltcourse between the second and third levels. The overall result is that the retail storefront appears to be substantially smaller than the adjacent storefronts. Staff believes that this can be remedied by elongating this storefront system so that is proportionally closer to the other storefront.

Alley Elevation

On this elevation there have considerable changes to the design of the windows including form and number of lights. For example, multi-light windows at the Juliet balconies on the second levels of the units at the south end of the elevation have been changed out to single light doors. However, Staff is less concerned about the details of the alley elevation than the other elevations because the visibility of this elevation will be largely obscured by the buildings in front facing South Washington Street. The main concern of Staff regarding this elevation has been the fourth floor of the rear of the building which can be seen from the George Washington Memorial Parkway. This section of the elevation has changed only slightly from the conceptual approval drawings. The major change is that the windows have been slightly narrowed and a multi-light transom added over the section with the two pair of French doors. In addition, the three story section immediately to the north of the four story element has had a change in roofline. The new drawings depict a gable roof form with dormers rather than the flat roof form previously reviewed.

Materials

The applicant has provided material samples of the different bricks to be used; samples of the proposed paint colors and pre-cast elements as well as window finish details. These will be made available to members at the public hearing.

Details

All of the brick work is proposed to running bond. The windows are proposed to aluminum clad wood windows with aluminum mutins. The entry doors are proposed to be wood, while the

service doors in the alley will be metal. In the opinion of Staff these are appropriate for a 21st century housing project.

The project architects have provided section drawings indicating the projection of the cornices, corbelling and dentil moulding. Staff believes that the extent of the proposed projections is sufficient to provide the visual relief indicated.

Metal fencing is proposed for both the railings in front of the Green Street English basement apartments and for the garden fencing along South Columbus Street. However, no details on the design of these fencing sections has been provided. Staff believes that further detailing of the metal fences is required.

Staff also believes that further information is required for the detailing of the garage entrance. As presented, the garage opening simply reads as a large void on the drawings. However, the garage opening is the single largest unit along the first level of the alley elevation. Staff believes that further details such as finishes, color and paving materials are needed before approval should be granted.

Staff Analysis:

In general, Staff believes that the revised designs present sufficient information on which the Board can approve a Certificate of Appropriateness. However, as indicated above there are a number of specific design elements that Staff believes need further attention and refinement. Specifically, Staff believes that the following elements need to be deferred for restudy:

1. Change of the roof material of the center entry section to slate or faux slate;
2. Consider painting the brick of the center entry section a contrasting color;
3. The projecting first floor bay on the South Columbus Street facade needs further design consideration;
4. Restore the transom on the easternmost building on Green Street;
5. Enlarge the storefront on the easternmost building on Jefferson Street;
6. Detailing of the garage entrance; and,
7. Details of the metal fencing in front of the Green Street English basement apartments and for the garden fencing along South Columbus Street.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Provide two Siamese connections located to the satisfaction of the Director of Code Enforcement. The second siamese connection shall be located on the opposite side of the building. A second hydrant shall be required for the second connection.
- C-2 A separate tap is required for the building fire service connection.
- C-3 Overhead lines in rear alley appear too close to proposed structure. Define what measures will be taken to eliminate clearance issues in alley. Clearances subject to approval during plan review and field inspection.
- C-4 Required exits, parking, and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11.
- C-5 The proposed project will require an automatic fire suppression system and fire alarm system in accordance with the USBC.
- C-6 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 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.
- C-8 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-9 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.
- C-10 A Certificate of occupancy shall be obtained prior to any occupancy of the building or portion thereof, in accordance with USBC 118.0.
- C-11 This structure contains mixed use groups [B, Business; R-2, Residential; S-2, Low-Hazard Storage (public garage, group 2) and is subject to the mixed use and occupancy requirements of USBC 313.0.
- C-12 The public parking garage (Use Group S-2) is required to be equipped with a sprinkler system (USBC 609.2).
- C-13 The public parking garage floor must comply with USBC 609.2.3 and drain through oil separators or traps to avoid accumulation of explosive vapors in building drains or sewers

as provided for in the plumbing code (USBC 2800.1: P-1002.0). This parking garage is classified as an S-2, Group 2, public garage. Floors of public garages must be graded to drain through oil separators or traps to avoid accumulation of explosive vapors in building drains or sewers (USBC 609.2.3).

- C-14 Enclosed parking garages must be ventilated in accordance with USBC 609.4: M-1602.2, Table M-1602.2, M-1604.4.1.
- C-15 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-16 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-17 Sheeting and shoring shall not extend beyond the property line; except when the developer has obtained a written release from adjacent property owners which has been recorded in the land records; or through an approved encroachment process.
- R-1 For firefighting reasons it is recommended that all stairs extend thru the roof so that door access to the roof is provided.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”