

Docket Item #17  
BAR CASE #2004-0236

BAR Meeting  
November 3, 2004

**ISSUE:** Conceptual Review of New Townhouses and Garages

**APPLICANT:** Stephanie Dimond

**LOCATION:** 610 & 612 S Washington Street

**ZONE:** CL/Commercial

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### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends conceptual approval of the application with the condition that the connector be clad in clapboard and that it be pulled back at the rear (east) end so that it is not on the same plane as the townhouses.

### **I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting conceptual approval of two new townhouses and garages to be located at 610 and 612 South Washington Street.

### **Townhouses**

The proposed townhouses have a Victorian Revival style design vocabulary and will be located on the existing surface parking lot to the south of Roberts Memorial Chapel, approximately 18' from the south wall of the church. The houses will align with the existing townhouses to the south. The two townhouses are mirror images of each other and have a central connector with a drive aisle which will provide access to new garages which will be located to the rear of the new houses.

The proposed townhouses have sidehall plans and are each three bays wide with a projecting two story turret element. The houses are two and a half stories in height and approximately 19' in width and 48' in length. The houses are to be constructed of brick with composite slate roofing. On the front at the first level each house will have a pair of wood paneled entry doors with decorative metal stairs and railings and two two-over-two true divided light wood windows. On the second level there will be a pair of two-over-two true divided light wood windows in the projecting bay and two other two-over-two true divided light wood windows. Each house will have a gable form dormer. Double shouldered chimneys will be located at the ends of each townhouse. The central connecting element will be set back approximately 23' from the front facades of the houses and will be two stories in height. It will also be constructed of brick with a standing seam metal roof. This section will have two two-over-two true divided light wood windows with a pair of foliated metal gates.

At each end of the houses there will be a pedestrian access metal foliated gate between brick piers.

The exterior sides of the houses will have four two-over-two true divided light wood windows and two pair of multi-light wood French doors on the first level; six two-over-two true divided light wood windows on the second level and a single two-over-two true divided light wood window on the third level.

On the interior sides of the house there will be three two-over-two true divided light wood windows and a multi-light wood pedestrian door on the first level; three similar windows on the second level and on the third level.

The rear of these houses has two pairs of multi-light French door on the first level; the second level also has two pair of multi-light French doors with decorative metal railings. The third level will have foliated metal railings as screening for rooftop mechanical equipment.

### Garages

Each of the proposed townhouses has a two car garage at the rear (east). The garages are one story in height and will be constructed of brick. The garages are approximately 19' in width and 18' in length. Each has two pair of wood panel doors with a glass and wood transom above. The exterior sides of the garages will have a brick recessed faux window.

### **II. HISTORY:**

The site of the proposed new townhouses and garages is currently a surface parking lot.

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

These rowhouses require approval of a Development Special Use Permit and are being brought before the Board on a conceptual basis for comments before the design is presented to the Planning Commission and City Council.

The architectural style of these proposed townhouses largely repeats the design vocabulary that the Board routinely reviews for the construction of new houses within the historic district. They are similar, for example, the houses approved for the Old Town Village development. They are also similar to the designs approved over the course of the last 15 years in the immediately adjacent neighborhood. Thus, Staff has no objection to the design of the townhouses. However, Staff does have concerns regarding the connector element between the two townhouses. Staff believes the use of brick creates a very heavy element and that additional differentiation should be provided between the townhouses and the connector. Thus, Staff recommends that the connector be clad in clapboard and that it be pulled back at the rear (east) end so that it is not on the same plane as the townhouses.

The new garages are automobile oriented utilitarian structures that are set well back from Washington Street and are, in the opinion of Staff, acceptable.

Staff believes that the level of ornamentation proposed as well as the materials that are specified are appropriate to the historic district. Additional information regarding materials and finishes will be required for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Because these lots front on Washington Street they must meet the Washington Street standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

### **Washington Street Standards:**

The Washington Street Standards were created to maintain the memorial and historical character of Washington Street. The Standards were established to ensure design of new buildings would be based upon existing buildings of historic merit.

The key Washington Street Standards that pertain to a conceptual review of this application are listed below:

- *Construction shall be compatible with and similar to the traditional building character, particularly mass, scale, design and style, found on Washington Street on commercial or residential buildings of historic architectural merit.*

The Victorian Revival design vocabulary of these new townhouses is reminiscent of elements of Victorian buildings found along Washington Street such as the 200 and 500 blocks of North Washington Street. The mass and scale of the new townhouses is similar to other two and three story residential buildings along Washington Street.

- *New buildings and additions to existing buildings shall not by their style, size, location or other characteristics, detract from, overwhelm, or otherwise intrude upon historic buildings which are found on the street.*

The new buildings do not detract from or overwhelm surrounding historic buildings.

- *The massing of new buildings or additions to existing buildings adjacent to historic buildings which are found on the street shall closely reflect and be proportional to the massing of the adjacent historic buildings.*

The proposed new townhouses meet this criterion.

- *New buildings and additions to existing buildings which are larger than historic buildings which are found on the street shall be designed to look separate and shall not give the impression of collectively being more massive than such historic buildings. This design objective shall be accomplished through differing historic architectural designs, facades, setbacks, roof lines and styles. Buildings should appear from the public right-of-way to have a footprint no larger than 100 feet by 80 feet. For larger projects, it is desirable that the historic pattern of mid-block alleys be preserved or replicated.*

This criterion is not applicable because the proposed new townhouses are not larger than typical historic buildings found on Washington Street.

- *Facades of a building generally shall express the 20 to 40 foot bay width typically found on early 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings characteristic of the Old and Historic Alexandria District, or the 15 to 20 foot bay width typically found on townhouses characteristic of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. Techniques to express such typical bay width shall include changes in material, articulation of the wall surfaces, changes in fenestration patterns, varying roof heights, and physical breaks, vertical as well as horizontal within the massing.*

The bay spacing of the two townhouses buildings meets this criterion.

- *Elements of design consistent with historic buildings which are found on the street shall be emphasized.*

The designs of the new houses is consistent with historic buildings along Washington Street.

- *New or untried approaches to design which result in new buildings or additions to existing buildings that have no historical basis in Alexandria or that are not consistent with an historic style in scale, massing and detailing, are not appropriate.*

The approach being proposed with this development is appropriate to the historical context of the historic district and represents traditional design styles.

- *Construction shall reflect the traditional fenestration patterns found within the Old and Historic Alexandria District. Traditional solid-void relationships exhibited within the district's streetscapes (i.e ratio of window and door openings to solid wall) shall be used in building facades.*

The current design of the project exhibits traditional the solid-void relationships that are found on other historic buildings in the historic district.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology, but has not included them as a condition at this early conceptual stage of review.

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Thus, Staff recommends concept approval of the proposed townhouses and garages with the condition that the connector be clad in clapboard and that it be pulled back at the rear (east) end so that it is not on the same plane as the townhouses.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The submitted plans do not include details of Outlot A. The applicant shall submit plans for this parcel or clarify that there is no plan for development of this parcel in order to review the submitted plan and any affect Outlot A may have on this submittal. **Applicant indicates no development is proposed and area will be sodded. The following responses will address the site plan based upon this condition.**
- F-2 The proposed emergency pedestrian egress shown on this submittal discharges into an enclosed area (gated driveway). The applicant shall detail how pedestrians will egress to a public way without going through a locked gate or other feature that requires special knowledge to operate. **Condition not met. Although applicant indicates the proposed egress is being negotiated, what is shown on the plans is not compliant with the egress provisions of the USBC.**
- F-3 The shown doorways adjacent to the driveway will be obstructed when the gated driveway is open. The applicant shall resolve this obstruction issue. **Condition met, issue has been resolved.**
- F-4 Clarify whether the proposed ingress / egress easement will be public or private. **Applicant indicates easement will be private.**
- F-5 The design of the emergency pedestrian easement shall be a hardscape design which clearly delineates the path of travel for pedestrians. **Condition not met.**
- C-1 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides, with no openings permitted within the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to porches with roofs and skylights within setback distance. The proposed structures are located next to a common driveway and the buildings then connect on the stories above the first floor. Not only does a fire wall need to occur on these upper levels but all of the supporting structure of the fire walls need to be rated as well. The applicant must clarify the ingress / egress easement issue noted in F-4 above in order to determine compliance with this condition. **Condition not met.**
- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). Please change the reference from the 1996 code to the 2000 code. Condition met.
- C-2 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. Acknowledged by applicant.

- C-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property. Roof drains to tie into sewer per applicant. Condition met.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application. Acknowledged by applicant.
- C-6 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. Acknowledged by applicant.
- C-7 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property. Acknowledged by applicant.
- C-8 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to any framing occurring above the first deck. Acknowledged by applicant.
- C-9 1 hour fire walls need to occur at the exterior walls of the garages that are located on the property lines. Acknowledged by applicant.
- R-1 Based on a history of sound transmission complaints, it is recommended that all dwelling units have a STC rating of at least 60 on the walls and ceilings that separate the units from each other or from the driveway. Acknowledged by applicant.
- R-2 This department strongly urges that fire sprinkler systems be installed in the townhouses. Applicant declines to provide fire sprinkler system for this project. **Applicant indicates structures will not be equipped with a fire sprinkler system.**
- F-1 The submitted plans do not include details of Outlot A. The applicant shall submit plans for this parcel or clarify that there is no plan for development of this parcel in order to review the submitted plan and any affect Outlot A may have on this submittal. **Applicant indicates no development is proposed and area will be sodded. The following responses will address the site plan based upon this condition.**
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Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records from 1850 indicate the presence of seven free African American households on this block of Washington Street. The area was part of the free black neighborhood known as The Bottoms. The properties to be developed therefore have the potential to yield significant archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities of African Americans in this early 19<sup>th</sup>-century free black neighborhood.
- C-1 To insure that significant information is not lost as a result of the current development project, the applicant must hire an archaeological consultant to conduct a Documentary Study and an Archaeological Evaluation. Contact Alexandria Archaeology to receive a scope of work for this investigation. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant must complete a Resource Management Plan, as outlined in the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards*. Preservation measures presented in the Resource Management Plan, as approved by the City Archaeologist, will be implemented.
- C-2 All archaeological preservation measures must be completed prior to ground-disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance). To confirm, call Alexandria Archaeology at (703) 838-4399.
- C-3 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
- C-4 The General Notes of the Preliminary and Final Site Plans must include the statements in C-2 and C-3 above so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements. Additional statements to be included on the Final Site Plan will be determined in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology.
- C-5 Certificates of Occupancy will not be issued for this property until the final archaeological

report has been received and approved by the City Archaeologist.

- C-6 If warranted by the City Archaeologist, the developer will erect a historic marker on the property according to specifications provided by Alexandria Archaeology. The marker will highlight the historical and archaeological significance of the property.
- C-7 If warranted by the City Archaeologist, the developer will produce a booklet for the public on the history and archaeology of the property, according to specifications provided by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-1 All archaeological work will be carried out in accordance with the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards* and is subject to the approval of the City Archaeologist.
- R-2 The applicant should not allow any other metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.