

Docket Item #18
BAR CASE #2004-0237

BAR Meeting
November 3, 2004

ISSUE: Conceptual Review of New Townhouses and Garages

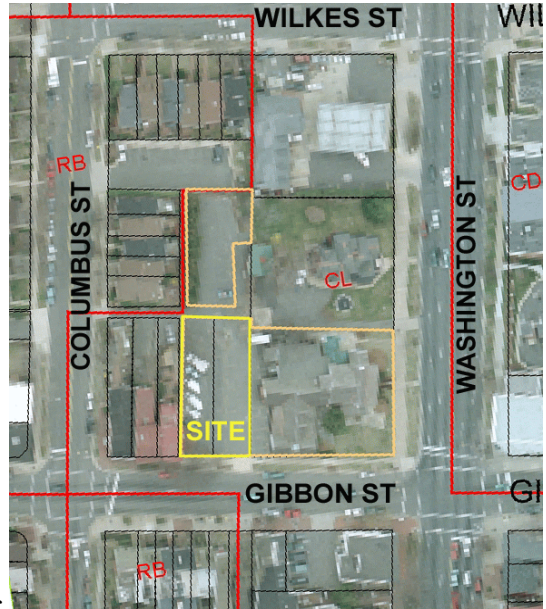
APPLICANT: Stephanie Dimond

LOCATION: 711-717 Gibbon Street

ZONE: CL/Commercial

I. Conceptual Proposal:

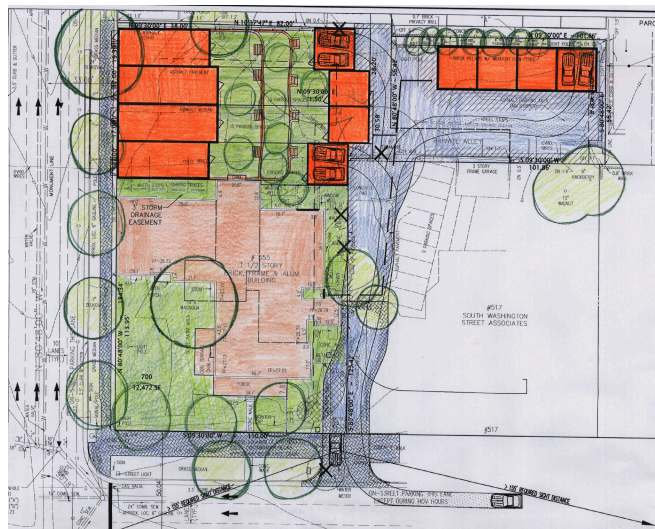
The applicant is requesting conceptual approval to construct four new townhouses and garages to be located at 711-717 Gibbon Street. The proposed townhouses have a Federal Revival style design vocabulary and will be located in the center of the block oriented towards Gibbon Street with detached garages for each unit. The detached garages will be accessed from a proposed alley that will be accessed from Washington Street.



There are a pair of Georgian Revival style townhouses flanked by a pair of Federal Revival style townhouses on the eastern and western facade. While the styles are characteristic of buildings found within the district, staff is concerned about the “symmetrical” nature of the design as discussed in more detail below. The townhouses are each two and a half stories in height. All are clad in brick and have standing seam metal roofs and brick stoops. The center pair are each two bays wide with a pedimented doorway, with a six panel door and a six-over-six true divided light wood window on the first level; there are two six-over-six true divided light wood windows on the second level. The windows have brick sills and painted brick jacks arches. The windows on this pair of houses have panel shutters. Each house also has a pedimented dormer.

The rear of these rowhouses has three multi-light wood doors with metal railings on the first level. On the second level there is a centered pair of multi-light French doors with a decorative metal railing flanked by two six-over-six true divided light wood windows. A dormer matching the front of the house is proposed on the rear elevation.

The pair of houses that flank the center pair are each three bays in width and have four panel wood entry doors with a single light transom. The first level has six-over-six true divided light wood windows on the first level and three similar windows on the second level. These houses have a dentiled cornice and a pair of gable dormers. There are no shutters proposed for these houses. The eastern townhouse has paneled faux shutters on each level on its east side.



Site Plan showing Old Club, townhouses with private garages, and condominium garages

The rear of these houses has two pairs of multi-light French doors with multi-light transoms and metal railings on the first level; the second level also has a pair of multi-light French doors flanked by two six-over-six true divided light wood window. Dormers matching the front of the house are proposed on the rear elevation.



Proposed townhouses adjacent existing townhouse at 719 Gibbon

Each of the proposed townhouses has a two car garage at the rear (south). These garages are ganged together and have access to an existing alley from either South Washington Street or South Columbus Street. The garages are one story in height and will be constructed of brick with asphalt shingle roofing. Each garage has wood panel doors with a glass and wood transom above. The interior elevations of each of the garages (which are not visible from the public right-of-way) have a single multi-light and wood pedestrian door with an adjacent multi-light window. At the west side of the garages there will be masonry piers with wood fencing to provide security.

II. Staff Analysis:

The style and modest scale of the proposed townhouses on Gibbon Street are appropriate for the historic district and particularly to this block face. The buildings will fill a gap in the street wall and will complement the existing one to two-story Old Club building to the east and the two-story residences to the west side and across Gibbon Street. The proposal will occupy a site that is now occupies by a surface parking lot on a prominent street within the district. The applicant has worked with staff to create a layout and scale, that are modest and well proportioned and will be compatible with the character of the adjoining Old Club building.

III. Remaining Issues:

Architectural Grouping:

The proposed composition of two matching colonial style townhouses in the center of the street face, bracketed by an alternately-designed matching colonial style townhouses on the east and west end, presents an a pattern of townhouse construction that is



Townhouses rearranged to group similar architectural styles in pairs

atypical within the district. Historically, townhouses were built in groupings of two or three (or more) which has resulted in a grouping of styles that create the rich fabric of the district today. Therefore, staff recommends that similarly styled townhouses be grouped together in pairs, as generally depicted in the graphic below, rather than arranged in a symmetrical grouping with flanking townhouses, which is not characteristic of the district. Staff believes that with this simple grouping of townhouse with the more modest scale units adjacent to the existing Old Club building, the proposal will be more consistent with the character of the historic district. Staff believes the grouping of styles is one of the characteristics that adds to the variety, richness and texture of the district and is character defining element of the district.

Detached Garages:

Staff strongly supports the use of detached garages, which are typical of most blocks within the district. However, a concern is that the garages are designed to appear as one monolithic structure rather than the small independent outbuildings characteristic of the district. Therefore staff is recommending that additional variation in materials be provided between the garages and a more varied roofline for be provided for both the townhouse and condominium garages. Otherwise, staff has no objection to the garages for these townhouses.

Materials:

While generally these issues are determined as part of the final review by the Board, because of the location, staff is recommending conditions as part of the conceptual approval to require high quality elements for the basic components of the building such as masonry facades, divided light windows and metal roofs or faux slate roofs for each of the units.

Other Issue:

The proposal will require subsequent site plan approval by the Planning Commission. One of the

areas that will require further study is the 24" caliper Zelkova street tree on Gibbon Street. The tree is a mature and well-developed tree in the curbside landscape strip in front of the proposed unit at 717 Gibbon. Staff is currently reviewing the tree report and a revised preliminary site plan submitted in mid-October. If it is determined that the tree must be saved, the City Arborist and staff may recommend that the units be setback slightly to ensure that the street tree can be retained. Staff does not believe this will impact the conceptual review process for the Commission.

IV. Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends conceptual approval of the four townhouses contingent on the following:

1. The units are grouped in pairs as generally depicted in *Attachment # 1*.
2. The detached townhouse garages and condominium garages provide a more varied roofline.
3. The detached townhouse garages and condominium garages provide more variation in materials and detailing.
4. The units shall be entire masonry (brick, stone or precast).
5. The roof material shall be metal or faux slate.
6. The windows shall be true divided light windows.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The proposed 4 townhomes along Gibbon Street shall have the proper fire separation distance from the existing property at 719 Gibbon Street. The existing separation distance between the proposed dwellings and the existing structures on Gibbon and Washington Street provides inadequate fire separation distance. The construction of the proposed townhouse adjacent to the Gibbon Street structure shall not adversely affect existing openings on the Gibbon Street structure, nor shall it negatively impact egress requirements of the structure (Gibbon Street). The applicant should schedule a meeting with Code Enforcement at the earliest opportunity to look at fire separation alternatives in order to meet code compliance. The submitted plans (site plan and plot plan) show the proposed town home on Lot 701 with along the eastern interior lot line. Therefore this dwelling must comply with the lot line restrictions of the USBC. There is a 9 foot setback for the existing structure on Lot 700 except in the area where the bump out and chimney are located along the lot line. In this area, the structure on Lot 700 must comply with the lot line restrictions of the USBC. **The existing West wall for the proposed Unit 101, which includes the existing chimney of the current structure has openings in the wall. The property line is located along this wall. This wall, as proposed shall be without windows or other openings as it is within the 5 foot required separation distance from the interior lot line for Lot 701.**
- F-2 The existing Emergency Vehicle Easement (EVE) located off South Columbus Street fronting the proposed set of two town homes shall be preserved in order to provide sufficient access to these structures. The proposed pavement shall continue to the existing EVE in order to provide fire access to the rear of the site. An EVE shall be provided from the existing EVE discussed above to the rear garage area of the proposed Gibbon Street town homes. The proposed emergency vehicle easement to the rear of the project exceeds 100 feet in length and is a dead end. There is insufficient fire apparatus turn around provisions in this area. Turnaround provisions cannot include the private alley next to 510 S. Columbus Street since the alley is privately owned. **The applicant is proposing a dry sprinkler system for all garages at the rear of the property. The applicant shall provide information on ownership of the garages (private or joint ownership). The determination of ownership will effect the design of the proposed system and its impact on the fire access issues. The proposed emergency vehicle easement connection with the existing emergency vehicle easement on the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority property shall be resolved prior to acceptance of the submitted site plan design.**
- C-1 All townhouse / condominium 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. For the proposed conversion of the existing building to condominiums

the required separation dimension is 5 feet. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to porches with roofs and skylights within setback distance. Further detail on Lots 700 and 701 as noted in F-1 above shall be provided in order to determine compliance with this condition. **See F-1 above for clarification of outstanding issues.**

- 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. Per applicant, roof drainage will be connected to City sewer.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application. Acknowledged by applicant.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). Condition met.
- 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. Condition met, shown as Note 5 on Sheet 7.
- 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 above the first deck. Acknowledged by applicant.
- C-9 The conversion of the existing building to residential condominiums requires the building to be equipped with a fire sprinkler system. Show location of the fire line, fire department connection, and the fire hydrant that serves the building. Condition not met. Provide details on site plan. Plan is not complete. **Resubmitted plans do not provide the required information. Plan is not Complete.**
- C-10 An automatic sprinkler system is recommended for the townhouses. Based upon new information on town homes, these structures will require a automatic sprinkler system in accordance with the USBC based upon the increased height and number of floors shown in the plans. (This condition was formerly listed as R-1). **Applicant indicates the town homes will not be equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system. This situation**

conflicts with the requirements of the USBC. The applicant shall resolve this issue with Code Enforcement as soon as possible.

- C-11 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. **Acknowledged by applicant.**
- C-12 A Certificate of occupancy shall be obtained prior to any occupancy of the building or portion thereof, in accordance with USBC 119.0. **Acknowledged by occupant.**
- 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 for interior shared walls and floor/ceilings. (This item was formerly listed as R-2). **Acknowledged by occupant.**

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Historical documents indicate that Thomas White, a prominent local merchant, purchased property on South Washington and Gibbon Streets in 1804. This property remained in the White family until 1925. Family tradition has indicated that the original portion (north end) of the extant house on the corner lot (555 S. Washington Street) was part of Broomilawn, an early tavern owned by the Whites near Hunting Creek, but there is no evidence to verify this theory. Architectural historians have indicated that portions of the house may date to the 18th century. The current development project focuses mainly on the lots (711-717 Gibbon Street) west of the house, which do not appear to have been part of the White property. The *G.M. Hopkins City Atlas of Alexandria* shows structures on these lots by 1877. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide evidence into domestic life in the 19th century.
- R-1 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.
- R-2 The above statement (in R-1) must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.