

Docket Item #17
BAR CASE# 2005-0165

BAR Meeting
July 20, 2005

ISSUE: New building for construction of 65 residential units with ground floor retail and underground parking; alteration of 1520, 1522 and 1524 and 1600 and 1602 King Street

APPLICANT: DSF-Long King Street, LLC.
by Jonathan P. Rak, attorney

LOCATION: 1514, 1516, 1518, 1520, 1522, 1524, 1600 and 1602 King Street and 1601 Dechantel Street

ZONE: OCH/Office Commercial High

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

I. ISSUE

This application requests approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the renovation of three 100 year Old Buildings and the construction of a new mixed use retail and residential condominium building in the 1500 block of King Street. The project (DSUP2005-0022) was approved by the Planning Commission on 4/5/05 and City Council on 4/16/05.

II. OVERVIEW:

This mixed use project for Upper King Street proposes to mix 65 condominium units with ground floor retail and a central open courtyard. The site is within 1,000 feet of the King Street metrorail station, providing an opportunity to create a pedestrian-oriented mixed use development near a transit stop. The approval of a development special use permitted an increase in the floor area ratio from 2.0 to 2.67. The OCH zone permits up to 3.0 FAR with a special use permit.



The redevelopment of the site presents several challenges and opportunities that include:

Challenges

- Providing an appropriate mass and scale that are compatible with King Street and the adjoining historic buildings;
- Ensuring that the building is well designed as one of the first significant developments since the preparation of the King Street Retail Strategy;
- Maintaining a level of ground level open space and “openness” for the development; and
- Minimizing traffic and parking impacts.

Opportunities

- Redevelopment of a site that has been identified by the *King Street Retail Strategy* as a potential redevelopment site.
- Pedestrian and streetscape improvements;
- Affordable housing;
- Mixed-use development within close proximity of a transit stop;
- Strengthen retail activity;
- Ground level open space, openness and publically accessible open space;
- Neighborhood serving retail uses; and
- Underground parking.
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The proposal is consistent with City Council’s vision and has been guided, in part, by the principles of the *King Street Retail Strategy* which is being considered by the City for approval. The adjoining area is characterized primarily by office and hotel uses to the west and north of the site and commercial, retail and restaurant uses to the eastern and southern portion of the site. The *King Street Retail Strategy* anticipates a mixed-use development for the site, with a transition in scale from the larger, newer buildings to the west to the smaller scale buildings on most of King Street to the east and with sensitivity for the established low-scale residential neighborhoods in close proximity to the site.

The proposal is an opportunity to introduce residential use into an area of King Street, which consists primarily of office uses. Additional residents on the upper portion of King Street will help provide shoppers and users of businesses on King Street, will enhance the vitality and level of activity of the street, encouraging night time patronage of the restaurants and retail and provide residential lights on the street.

Pedestrian Circulation, Streetscape and Open Space

The applicant is providing high quality ground-level open space, most of which is consolidated within a 4,500 sf central courtyard that is accessible and visible from King Street. The applicant has agreed to provide a public access easement for the internal pedestrian connections and the internal courtyard park to enable this space to function as a neighborhood pocket park for the adjoining residents and King Street. Because of the adjoining retail uses, the courtyard space could also serve as an area for outdoor dining and other uses that could help to activate the space. More specifically, open space and pedestrian conditions include:



Proposed North Elevation-View from King St.

- Sculpture of focal element within the public courtyard open space;
- Stamped asphalt pedestrian crosswalks and pedestrian countdown signals;

- \$15,000 contribution for improvements to the King Street park;
- Additional landscaping and pedestrian scale;
- Public benches and trash receptacle for the street frontages and internal courtyard; and
- Bicycle racks.

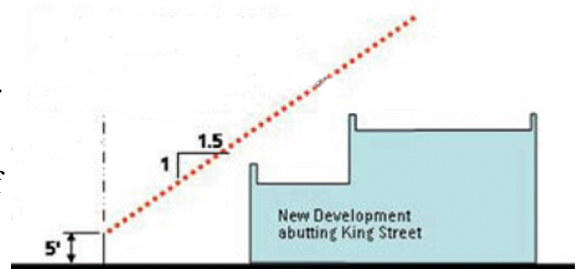
The proposed development will provide a significant amount of pedestrian improvements on King Street within the King Street Park and the creation of a new, useable consolidated area of open space courtyard for a community pocket park for both residents and shoppers.

Building Design/Mass and Scale

With a request for an FAR increase from 2.0 to 2.67, and a very sensitive location on King Street, amid historic structures and at an important transition point among different scale buildings, the applicant has achieved a site plan and building mass, with extensive architectural detailing, which respects the historic context and meets the challenges of a complex site.

The site layout, building massing and open space were influenced by the following:

- maintain the integrity of the 100 year old building;
- maintain the scale and character of King Street;
- provide publically accessible and visible ground-level open space; and
- provide ground floor retail on King Street.



The goal of the *King Street Retail Strategy* is to ensure that any redevelopment of the site is compatible with the mass, scale and character of the buildings on King Street. The study identifies an approach which requires that the upper floors of taller buildings be setback from the street to maintain the 35 ft. - 50 ft. building height on King Street and to minimize shadows cast on King Street by taller buildings.



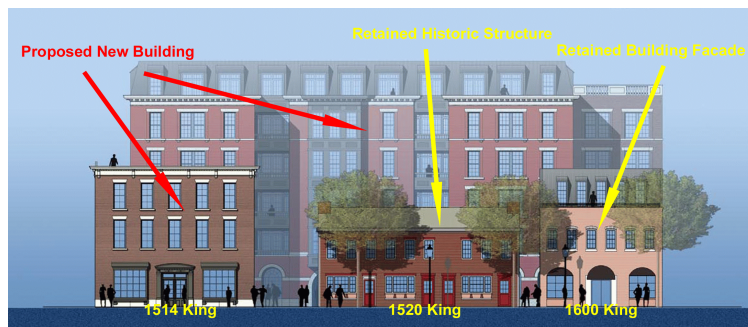
KSRS recommends saving 1520 and 1600 King Street

In addition to a design which is compatible with the mass and scale of other buildings on King Street, this site is particularly important because it includes three existing buildings.

Specifically, the three existing buildings include a 100 year old building (1520 King Street) and the other two buildings (1514 and 1600 King St.) were constructed later, in the early 1900s. The *King Street Retail Strategy* specifically identifies the buildings at 1520 and 1600 King Street as buildings

1520 King St 1600 King St

that should be retained.



Proposed North Elevation - View from King Street

These principles have resulted in a creative and sensitive building mass and design for the site. The proposal retains the central 100 year old building and retains the facade for 1600 King Street, consistent with the *King Street Retail Strategy*. A new building will be constructed at 1514 King Street.

The development will consist of a U-shaped building constructed next to and behind the central historic building, which makes the historic building the focal element of the proposal. The mass of the new construction is divided into different components, with the taller buildings setback 61 ft. from King Street, and the proposed new building on King Street is three stories, consistent with the heights of buildings on King Street. The development also features significant building breaks. Parking is located within a two-level below-grade parking garage with access from Dechantal Street, which is a public right-of-way that functions as a service alley for the adjoining office and residential buildings.

Renovation of 100 Year Old Buildings, 1520 , 1522 and 1524 King Street

At the present time, no changes are proposed to the King Street facades of these buildings. At the rear on the first level, once the one story addition is removed, the existing brick will be infilled and six new windows will be installed to match those on the second level.

Materials

The applicant has provided material sample boards detailing te exterior building materials including siding, roofing, cornices and windows. These boards will be made available to Board members at the public hearing.

III. BACKGROUND:

Site Description:

The site is surrounded by two and three-story buildings that consist of retail and office uses and three to five-story office buildings to the south of the site along Prince Street. Farther to the west, along King Street, there are five and six-story office buildings that have ground floor retail as well as a six-story hotel building. To the north of the site across King Street, the buildings range in height from two to five stories and consist of retail and office uses. Beyond the immediate commercial area on King and Prince Street are several residential areas, including Harvard Street.



South Side of King St.-East of Site.

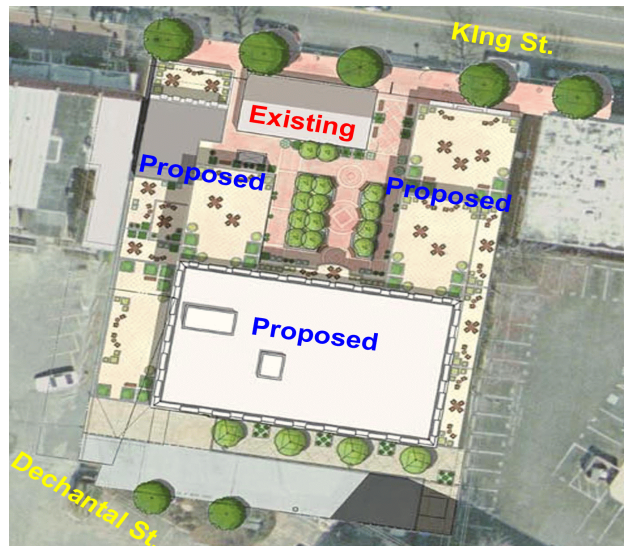


South Side of King St.-West of Site.

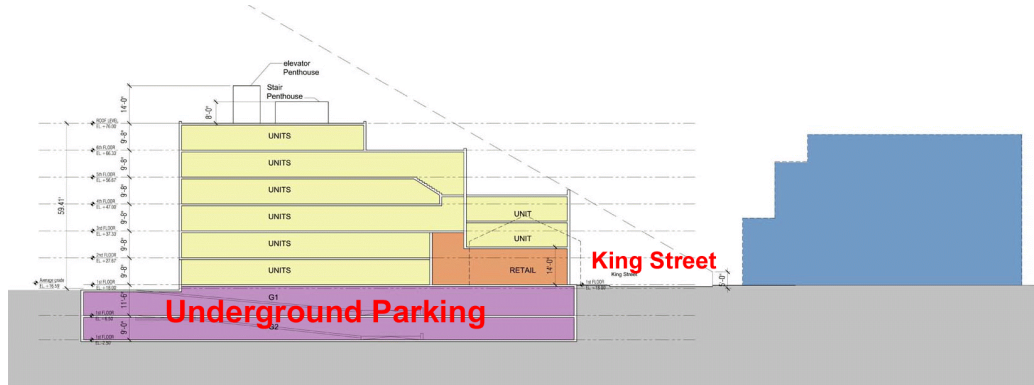
The site is essentially flat and almost entirely covered by buildings or an existing gravel parking lot. The property is zoned OCH/ Office Commercial High which permits an FAR of 2.0 and 3.0 with a special use permit and heights up to 82 feet.

Proposal:

The proposed project will retain the 100-year old building at 1520 King Street and the facade of the early 20th century building at 1600 King Street. It proposes to construct a new building located to the side and rear of the existing historic building. The two buildings will be separated by a 4,594 sq. ft. courtyard that is accessible from King Street and open to the public. The height of the new buildings will range from 35 feet, in three-stories along King Street, to 60 feet, or six-stories on the rear portion of the site. It will include 65 residential units and 5,414 sq.ft. ground floor retail along King Street. The residential units will consist of 49 one-bedroom units and 16 two-bedroom units.



The proposal will be constructed over a two-level underground parking garage. A total of 100 parking spaces will be provided and will consist of residential parking (85 spaces), plus 10 (15%) visitor parking spaces and five additional spaces for the retail uses. Controlled access will be provided for the underground garage.



Cross Section of Proposed Structure-Looking West

Access to the underground parking will be from the rear of the site along Dechantel Street. The rear entrance will also provide access to the loading dock and the trash compactor area.

In an effort to provide a sufficient amount of ground level open space and address the concerns regarding massing, the site plan has been designed to create a central 4,500 sf public courtyard with direct pedestrian access to King Street. The courtyard provides a transitional buffer between the mass of the proposed building and the scale of the structures along King Street. The proposed courtyard will also be open to the public.

IV. ANALYSIS:

The proposed development, with its mix of uses and useable and consolidated central courtyard creates what staff believes will be a vibrant urban development consistent with the City Council's *Strategic Plan* and the *King Street Retail Strategy*. The redevelopment of this site presents an opportunity to provide residential use within two blocks of the King Street Metro station. The proposed mix of land-uses (residential and retail) will enable neighborhood serving retail uses and residential uses within a reasonable walking distance to the Metro station, providing support for this important transportation amenity within the City. The central open space with landscaping, amenities and elements such as public art or a water fountain will create a pocket park or "outdoor room" which will provide a useable area to bring people together through casual encounters, increasing daily exchanges and a sense of community for this portion of the City.

The challenge for this site has been to integrate redevelopment with the existing low-scale buildings that surround the site and are anticipated to remain. The applicant has worked with staff to provide many of the necessary elements such as building breaks and designing the buildings to appear as separate buildings.

In addition to mass and scale, staff has added conditions to ensure that the overall design and

materials of the building, open space and streetscape improvements are of the highest quality because of the scale, adjoining uses and the adjoining Old and Historic District to ensure a high quality project for this visually prominent and economically important location on King Street. With the recommended changes to the building design, massing and open space, the proposed development will be more compatible with King Street, the *King Street Retail Strategy* and the adjoining neighborhoods and will provide public benefit for King Street.

Building Design - Scale:

The site design has focused on the important location on King Street, the historic context of buildings, and the emerging principles of the *King Street Retail Strategy*. The goal for additions to or adjacent to historic buildings is to minimize the impact to the structure and to provide a scale and style of buildings that will be subordinate to the historic structure, Staff worked with the applicant to provide full building breaks around the existing historic building and to ensure that the fabric of the original historic building is retained. This approach also makes the 100 year old building the central piece of the development, both from King Street and the internal courtyard. In addition, for potential redevelopment sites such as 1514 King street the *King Street Retail Strategy* recommends that the buildings be setback at a ratio of 1 to 1.5 from King Street to ensure that larger buildings do not cast shadows on King Street and also to maintain the relatively modest scale of King Street.

The applicant has worked with City staff to find an architectural articulation that successfully draws upon precedent in Alexandria, does not compete with the historic foreground buildings, and mitigates the impression of through the treatment of the roof, the building base, and other elements. The pattern of windows has been subtly arranged in groups, particularly on the side and rear elevations, to create a secondary order in the massing of the building. The mass of the building has been further subdivided into segments with tiers of recessed balconies or projecting windows that create the impression of a series of smaller elements.



Plaza Courtyard Perspective

V. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.