

Docket Item #13
BAR CASE #2005-0202

BAR Meeting
October 19, 2005

ISSUE: Conceptual Review of 18 multifamily units

APPLICANT: Van Metre Companies by Catharine Puskar, Atty.

LOCATION: 1300, 1306, 1312 & 1320 Duke Street

ZONE: OC Office/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends conceptual approval of the proposed townhouse condominium units.

NOTE: Docket item #12 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting conceptual approval of 18 condominium units in three buildings. Each building will have six units and will have the appearance of a row of six townhouses. The buildings will occupy the entire south side of the 1300 block of Duke Street with the two end buildings wrapping the corners to extend approximately 100' to the south along South Payne and South West streets. The three buildings fall within the boundaries of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. In addition to these buildings, the proposed project includes a single, four story, 40-unit condominium building to be located behind the townhouses. There will be an underground parking facility that will provide all required parking for the entire development project.

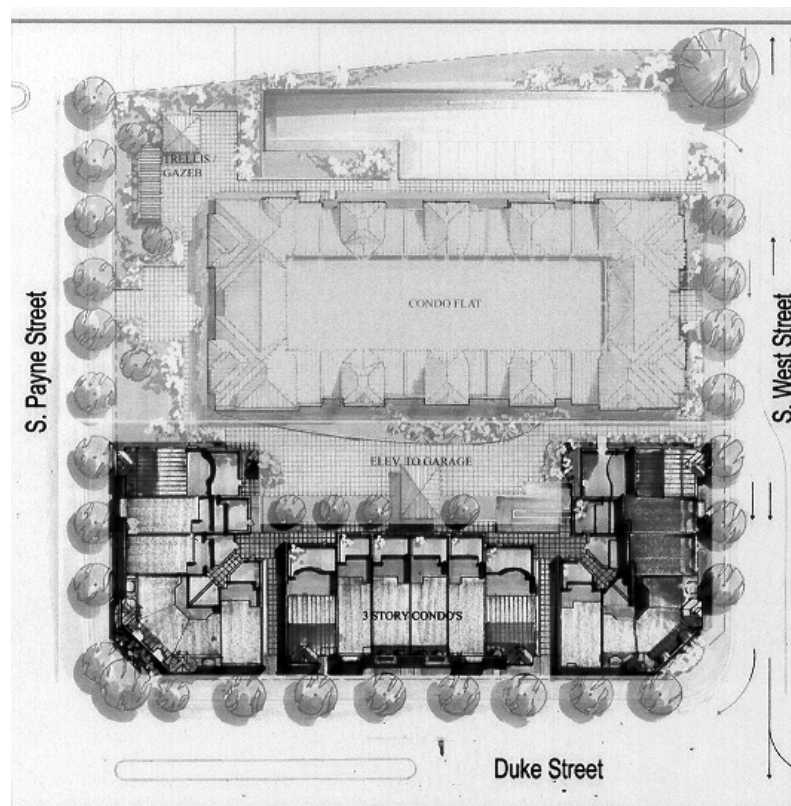


Figure 1 - Site plan

The present case is limited to conceptual approval of the townhouse portion of the development. The purpose of the conceptual design review is for the BAR to make a finding of appropriateness on the *scale, mass and architectural character* of the proposed project prior to consideration of the project by the Planning Commission and City Council. The application for a permit to demolish the existing buildings on the site is also docketed for the October 19, 2005 Board of Architectural Review hearing (docket item #12, BAR Case #2005-0240).

The project will require a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) but has not yet been scheduled for hearing by the Planning Commission or City Council. Should these bodies approve the DSUP application, the townhouse portion of the project will again be reviewed by the Board of Architectural Review. This final review will focus on materials, proportions, relationships between architectural elements and the detailing of specific elements such as cornices, windows and doors for a determination that the final design complies with the Board's Standards and the *Design Guidelines* in all respects. Staff notes that the applicant has developed the plans well beyond conceptual design and has made these materials available to Staff. However, following the typical process for development projects of this type, the materials provided to the Board for the present case are limited to those necessary for a conceptual approval.

Site Description

The site, located on the south side of the 1300 block of Duke Street, is adjacent to the western and southern boundaries of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. To the west, the district ends at Peyton Street one block away. For a short section of Duke Street, including the subject block, the historic district extends only 100' south of the Duke Street right of way line. The surrounding development reflects the transitional nature of this area in its diversity of size, architectural character, period of construction and use.

The northern face of the 1300 block of Duke Street includes a number of historic residential and commercial structures, including the highly significant Franklin & Armfield Slave Pen at 1315 Duke Street, now the offices of the Northern Virginia Urban League. The largest of the historic buildings on the blockface, the mansard-roofed brick building is three bays wide and three-and-a-half stories high. To the east of 1315 Duke Street, the adjacent mid- and late-19th century brick houses are smaller, generally only two bays wide and two or two-and-a-half stories high. To the west is the large, four story brick office building which was built in 1985 and is occupied by the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists. Beyond this, at the corner with West Street, is the circa 1890 house at 1323 Duke Street. In 2005, the Board approved the alterations and additions to the two bay wide, two story brick building (BAR Case #2005-0202, 2/16/2005). The addition will be located to the east and north of the existing building and will serve as senior housing. The brick addition will be three bays wide on Duke Street with a height of three stories.

To the east of the site, the north face of the 1200 block of Duke Street consists of small scale residences of the 19th and early 20th centuries. These brick houses are generally two bays wide and two stories high. The south face of the 1200 block of Duke Street is occupied by two large, low utilitarian buildings and parking area serving the Fannon Companies. Filling out the block behind the Fannon property and outside the historic district are the two-and-one half story brick townhouses of the Old Town Village development which were constructed in 1998.

To the west of the site, the north face of the 1400 block of Duke Street is dominated by the historic Shiloh Baptist Church building at 1401 Duke Street. The red brick Gothic Revival style church was constructed in 1891. On the south side of the blockface is the sprawling brick office/warehouse building at 1400 Duke Street and 301 South West Street. One and two stories in height, the 37,674 square foot building was built in 1981 in a modern vocabulary.

Directly behind the subject site and outside the historic district, on the south half of the block bounded by Duke, South Payne, South West streets and Roundhouse Lane, are two large condominium buildings oriented to Payne and West streets with surface parking on the interior of the lot. These six story brick and fiber cement clad buildings were constructed in 1999 as part of the Old Town Village development.

Project Description

The proposed project consists of three buildings, labeled Building #s 2, 3, and 4 on site plans provided by the applicant. Each building consists of six condominium units. Each unit consists of three stories vertically stacked and is expressed on the exterior as a separate townhouse facade. Thus each building is broken into six townhouse facades. There are six different townhouse facade types (Elevation A, B, C, D, E & F) which are arrayed in the three buildings in the following pattern: Building #4 (Elevation E, A, C, F, F, C), Building #3 (Elevation D, A, B, B, A, E), and Building #2 (Elevation C, F, F, C, A, E). Building #3 is centered on the Duke Street blockface. Building #4 is located to the east of Building #3. It has two units on Duke Street and continues around the corner with four units on Payne Street. Building #2 is located to the west of Building #3. It has two units on Duke Street and continues around the corner with four units on South West Street. Thus, the two end buildings (Building #s 2 and 4) are mirror images of each other.



Figure 2 - Duke Street elevation



Figure 3 - West Street elevation

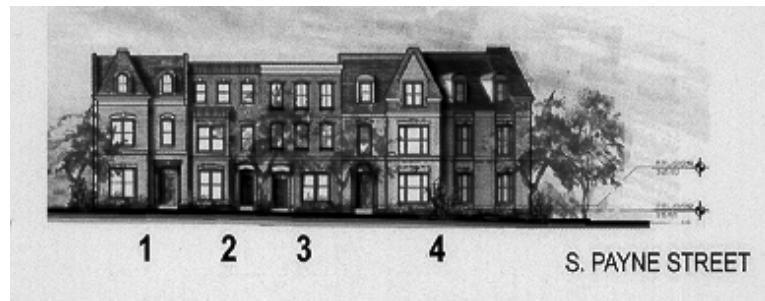


Figure 4 - Payne Street elevation

All units are accessed through front doors oriented to the street and a small front yard of varying depth as well as an enclosed rear yard. Except for the corner units, each unit is either 16', 18' or 20' wide. The four corner units are wedge shaped with angled front elevations totaling 42' in width and rear elevations approximately 13' wide.

The buildings will be clad in a several different types of red brick. Several of the units will have the brick painted. The color schemes for each unit will be the same front and back. The windows will be double-hung aluminum clad wood windows. The trim will be wood, Fypon, brick and precast concrete. The roofs will be metal and architectural asphalt shingles which seek to mimic slate. The railings and cresting will be aluminum.

The six facade types are based upon Victorian era rowhouse design and have architectural features typical of the Italianate and Queen Anne styles. A sense of variety and rich architectural character is conveyed through the use of bays, a variety of roof forms and heights, a variety of window configurations and types, bracketed and corbeled cornices, belt courses and watertables, door and window trim and details like decorative brickwork and rooftop cresting and finials.

Unlike the front elevations, the rear facades of the townhouses make no attempt to appear as a particular historical style, but instead use traditional elements in a contemporary fashion. As on the front, the rear elevations have six different rear facades types which are arranged in patterns echoing the patterns used to compose the front facades. The materials used for the rear elevations are identical to those used for the front. The rear elevations feature grouped french doors and windows, inset third level balconies with metal railings and heavy cornices. The rear elevations will be minimally visible from within the historic district.

The side elevations, however, will be more readily visible. There will be two types: one having a mansard profile and corresponding to front elevation type D & E; and one with a flat roofline corresponding to front elevation type C. The side elevations are clad in brick and have brick watertables and string courses. Each story has a different fenestration pattern with single or paired windows with flat lintels. An arched recessed blind opening is utilized at the front of the first story. An arched opening with railing at the rear of the third story opens onto the rear inset balcony.

There will be 10' wide pedestrian alleyways on either end of Building #3. These will provide access to residents and the public to an interior courtyard which will have raised planter beds, paved walks and seating areas. A small service building housing an elevator and stairway for the parking garage and a trash room will be located a center of the courtyard. The building will be clad in brick and will have a metal roof composed of two intersecting hipped forms. The south wall of the courtyard will be formed by the four story, forty-unit condominium building that is also part of the development but outside the historic district boundaries. This building will be surrounded by additional areas of raised planters and paved walkways. Access to the underground parking for the entire development will be at the southwest corner of the site from South West Street. All other existing curb cuts into the site will be eliminated.

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in docket item #12, the subject block has always been lightly developed. Well into the 20th century it held only two 19th century residential buildings (1300 and 1318 Duke Street) with their associated outbuildings. The present buildings were constructed from 1951 through 1978 for a variety of light industrial/commercial uses, most associated with the Fannon Petroleum Company operations.

III. ANALYSIS:

The location of the project is at the western gateway to the historic district on heavily traveled Duke Street. The existing development on the site, consisting of scattered light industrial/commercial buildings, does not relate positively to the district in terms of use or appearance. The redevelopment of the site offers an important opportunity to create a new streetscape linking the large scale office development at the west end of Duke Street with the small scale and dense residential development of the historic district to the east. Staff believes the proposed project successfully achieves this goal and will serve to enhance and reinforce the historic district.

The applicant has worked with the Staff of the Planning and Zoning Department to improve the project. Initially, plans had called for two large condominium buildings on the site. At the request of the department, the applicant broke the northernmost building, which falls within the historic district, into three smaller structures. The exterior appearance is of three townhouse clusters or rows. Although each "townhouse" is actually a condominium rather than a fee simple house, the exterior appearance corresponds directly to the interior arrangement. This honesty in appearance is carried through to the functioning front entrances and individual rear yards. In addition to reducing the bulk by breaking the one building into three clusters, the applicant reduced the height of the proposed structure from four and five stories to three stories. This height is significantly more compatible with the single family residential development of the historic district. Neighboring historic buildings range from two stories to three-and-one-half stories. Modern buildings in the immediate area are up to four and even six stories.

The proposed plan includes two breaks in the building wall along Duke Street. These breaks provide visual relief and suggest the breaks found in the historic district where the building wall is typically interrupted by alleys and side yards, rather than continuous.

Staff believes the siting, massing, height, general fenestration, roof forms, and spacing between

the buildings is appropriate and conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for new multi-family residential construction (New Residential Construction - Pages 5-6). Staff believes the street front elevations of the three buildings are extremely well-thought out. The six facade types are used through the three buildings in a way that provides both variety and harmony. As commonly seen in historic rows, each of the three clusters contains repeated facades (in reverse pairs or as bookends). The Victorian detailing reflects the Italianate and Queen Anne style houses of the historic district without directly copying. For the most part, design elements are appropriate to the style of the facade. The architectural detailing is generally commensurate with the quality and quantity of detailing found on historic structures in the district. The side elevations are also acceptable. They relate well to the adjacent front facade and are appropriately treated as simpler, secondary elevations. Staff's initial impression of the rear elevations was that they are too different from the front elevations. They reflect current design trends rather than mid- to late-19th century architectural practice. On further consideration, Staff believes the rear facades are acceptable because they are related to the fronts by their use of common materials, but most importantly, because they will not be viewed with the front facades.

In general, Staff believes the proposed materials are appropriate. The Board's subsequent review of the final design will provide an opportunity to review the materials in more detail. However, Staff does feel it would be useful to raise some concerns at this time. In order to ensure that this important and highly visible project is of the highest quality, Staff makes the following recommendations:

1. The windows on the front and side elevations should be wood true divided light windows;
2. The railings should be painted galvanized steel rather than aluminum; and,
3. The pre-cast elements should be cast stone.

Staff notes the comments of Code Enforcement, but has not included them as conditions at this conceptual stage of the review.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends conceptual approval of the proposed townhouse condominium units.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

Demolition Comments

C-1 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.

Concept Comments

F-1 FDCs are obstructed by planters or parking spaces. All FDCs shall be clearly visible and directly accessible from either West Street or Payne Street. Landscaping shall be kept clear of FDC locations.

F-2 The proposed project is located on a site used to store flammable and combustible liquids. An environmental assessment and proper remediation will be required prior to construction.

F-3 The height of these structures and the garage structure are required to be equipped with an automatic fire suppression system.

F-4 Currently, the tallest building is proposed as under 50 feet in height. Should any structure exceed the 50 foot limit, ladder truck access will be required to the two longest sides of the affected structure(s).

R-1 Provide an Emergency Vehicle Easement along the private roadway leading to the garage.

R-2 Based on a history of sound transmission complaints, it is recommended that all dwelling units have a STC rating of at least 60.

R-3 Handicap parking spaces for apartment and condominium developments shall remain in the same location(s) as on the approved site plan. Handicap parking spaces shall be properly signed and identified as to their purpose in accordance with the USBC and the Code of Virginia. Ownership and / or control of any handicap parking spaces shall remain under common ownership of the apartment management or condominium association and shall not be sold or leased to any single individual. Parking within any space identified as a handicap parking space shall be limited to only those vehicles which are properly registered to a handicap individual and the vehicle displays the appropriate license plates or window tag as defined by the Code of Virginia for handicap vehicles. The relocation, reduction or increase of any handicap parking space shall only be approved through an amendment to the approved site plan.

R-4 The applicant of any building or structure constructed in excess of 10,000 square feet; or any building or structure which constructs an addition in excess of 10,000 square feet

shall contact the City of Alexandria Radio Communications Manager prior to submission of final site plan. The proposed project shall be reviewed for compliance with radio requirements of the City of Alexandria to the satisfaction of the City of Alexandria Radio Communications Manager prior to site plan approval. Such buildings and structures shall meet the following conditions:

- a) The building or structure shall be designed to support a frequency range between 806 to 824 MHz and 850 to 869 MHz.
- b) The building or structure design shall support a minimal signal transmission strength of -95 dBm within 90 percent of each floor area.
- c) The building or structure design shall support a minimal signal reception strength of -95 dBm received from the radio system when transmitted from within 90 percent of each floor area.
- d) The building or structure shall be tested annually for compliance with City radio communication requirements to the satisfaction of the Radio Communications Manager. A report shall be filed annually with the Radio Communications Manager which reports the test findings.

If the building or structure fails to meet the above criteria, the applicant shall install to the satisfaction of the Radio Communications Manager such acceptable amplification systems incorporated into the building design which can aid in meeting the above requirements. Examples of such equipment are either a radiating cable system or an FCC approved type bi-directional amplifier. Final testing and acceptance of amplification systems shall be reviewed and approved by the Radio Communications Manager.

- R-5 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.
- C-1 The public parking garage (Use Group S-2) is required to be equipped with a sprinkler system (USBC 903.2.11).
- C-2 The public parking garage floor must comply with USBC 406.2.6 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 2901). This parking garage is classified as an S-2, Group 2, public garage.
- C-3 Enclosed parking garages must be ventilated in accordance with USBC 406.4.2. Show vent locations on plans.
- C-4 Provide two Siamese connections located to the satisfaction of the Director of Code Enforcement.
- C-5 A separate tap is required for the building fire service connection.

- C-6 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-7 The developer shall provide a separate Fire Service Plan which illustrates: a) emergency ingress/egress routes to the site; b) two fire department connections (FDC) to the building, one on each side/end of the building; c) fire hydrants located within on hundred (100) feet of each FDC; d) on site fire hydrants spaced with a maximum distance of three hundred (300) feet between hydrants and the most remote point of vehicular access on site; e) emergency vehicle easements (EVE) around the building with a twenty-two (22) foot minimum width; f) all Fire Service Plan elements are subject to the approval of the Director of Code Enforcement.
- C-8 The final site plans shall show placement of fire easement signs.
- C-9 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-10 Prior to submission of the Final Site Plan #1, 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-11 A Certificate of occupancy shall be obtained prior to any occupancy of the building or portion thereof, in accordance with USBC 119.0.
- C-12 Required exits, parking, and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11.

Historic Alexandria:

“Prefer wood windows and doors.”

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records indicate that at least one house was present on this property by the early 19th century. John Emerson owned most of the block from at least 1850 into the 1870s, and lived on the property. In addition, there is evidence for the presence of a free African American household on this street face in 1810 and 1830, but the exact address is unknown. The development lot therefore has potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into life in early Alexandria, perhaps relating to free blacks.
- 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 complete a Documentary Study for this property. Contact Alexandria Archaeology to obtain a scope of work for this study.
- C-2 If the Documentary Study indicates that the property has the potential to yield significant buried resources, an Archaeological Evaluation will be required. 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-3 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-4 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-5 The statements in C-3 and C-4 above must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on each site plan sheet that involves any demolition or ground disturbing activity (include sheeting and shoring and grading). This will insure 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-6 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.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

“No comment.”