Docket Item # 5
BAR CASE #2008-0235
February 18, 2009

ISSUE: Alterations and Signage

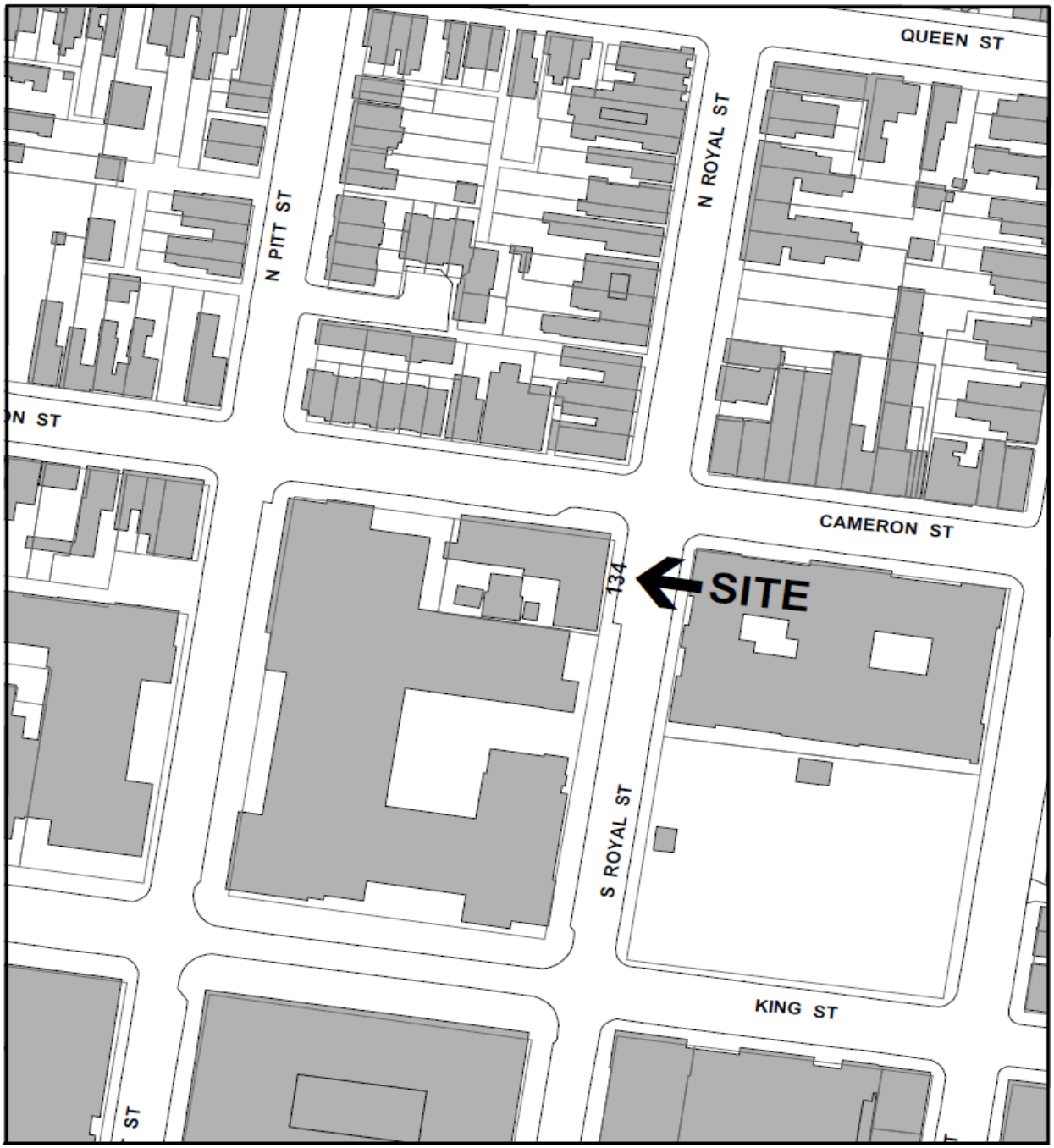
APPLICANT: City of Alexandria (Patrice McAuliffe, Agent)

LOCATION: 134 North Royal Street (Gadsby's Tavern)

ZONE: CD / Commercial Downtown Zone

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application with the following conditions.

1. That the final design and historic accuracy of the text and graphics applied to the glass exhibit panels be reviewed and approved by the City Archaeology and Historic Preservation Planning staff;
2. That the applicant and their design team work with Historic Preservation Planning staff to refine the lighting program to ensure the lighting is compatible with the site and surrounding neighborhood, prior to the project's final permit inspections;
3. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged;
4. The applicant/developer shall 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;
5. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology; and,
6. The statements in archaeology conditions above shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.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BACKGROUND:

The BAR began its review of this Certificate of Appropriateness proposal at its December 17, 2008 public hearing. The Applicant and their design team provided the Board with a robust presentation which included the existing deteriorating conditions of the ice well, the historic context of the resource, and the proposed new interpretive program for the site. The Applicant discussed that the two main objectives of the new design was to create a controlled environment that would prevent further deterioration of the ice well's historic fabric and develop an interactive interpretive program for the Gadsby's Tavern visitors which highlights the historic ice well while not impacting the historic fabric of the ice well or the tavern. The BAR heard testimony from the Applicant, their design team, and citizens during the public hearing. After discussion, the case was deferred by the Board, with the recommendation that the Applicant explore the possibility of different design alternatives or modification of the requested design. The Board recommended that the Applicant work with the staff, discuss the project further with members of the historic preservation community, and suggested the Applicant meet with the individual board members.

After successful meetings with the Applicant, the Board recommended a work session to present a modified plan for additional informal commentary.

A public work session was held on February 4, 2009 after the Board's regularly scheduled hearing. The revised design received positive feedback from the majority of the Board members. The suggested changes and directives expressed to the Applicant were to revisit material selections for the handrails and work on public outreach to local preservation and civic groups.

I. ISSUE:

The Applicant is requesting approval for improvements to the sidewalk and viewing areas of the historic ice well at the Gadsby's Tavern Museum located at 134 North Royal Street. The program proposes the following changes and alterations to the site surrounding the historic resource:

Viewing Area

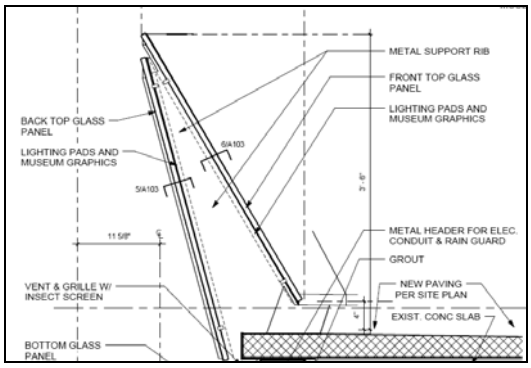
The design proposes to reduce the depth of the viewing area to about 42" below the current sidewalk, and install new curvilinear steps, with a more gradual slope. These evening lit steps are designed in an amphitheatre configuration to serve as standing and sitting areas for museum patrons.

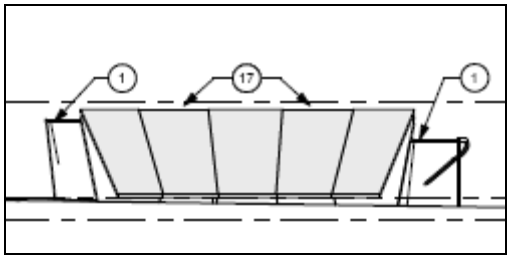
Glass Exhibit Panels – Surrounding Ice Well at Sidewalk Level

Original Design:

The existing metal guard rails were to be replaced with two, angled, internally lit, solid plate glass exhibit panels mounted to each other in a semi-circular shape at the sidewalk level. They are to be fabricated in a frosted safety glass with a metal support rib to display the proposed

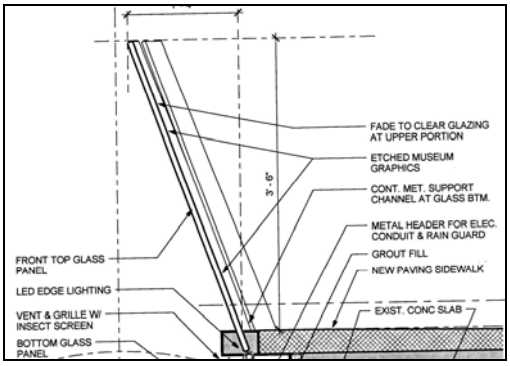
museum graphics.

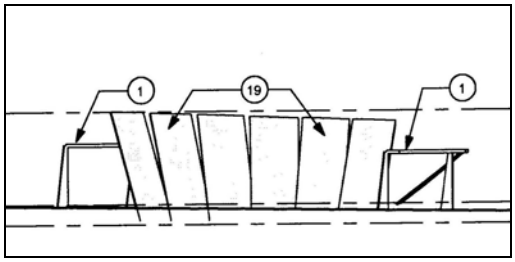




Current Design:

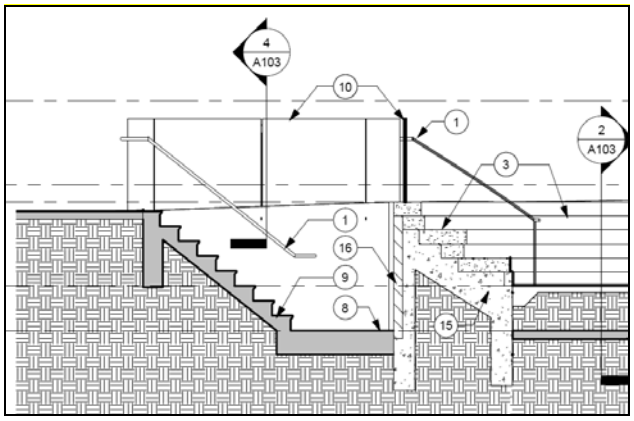
The existing metal guard rails are being replaced with separate, externally lit, glass exhibit panels fabricated in a clear safety glass. The glass display panels will be transparent, with the text and photo displays being etched into the glass. They will be supported through the use of a metal channel support system. There will not be any visible metal frames or "ribs" surrounding or within the glass panel, providing a clear view through the glass of the existing Gadsby's Tavern wall surface. The Applicant is requesting conceptual approval for the images and text to be displayed on these panels, with the final design and historic accuracy of the text to be reviewed and approved by the City Archaeology and Historic Preservation Planning staff. The glass panels are an educational medium for the museum to convey the cultural and historical significance of the Tavern and Ice Well.



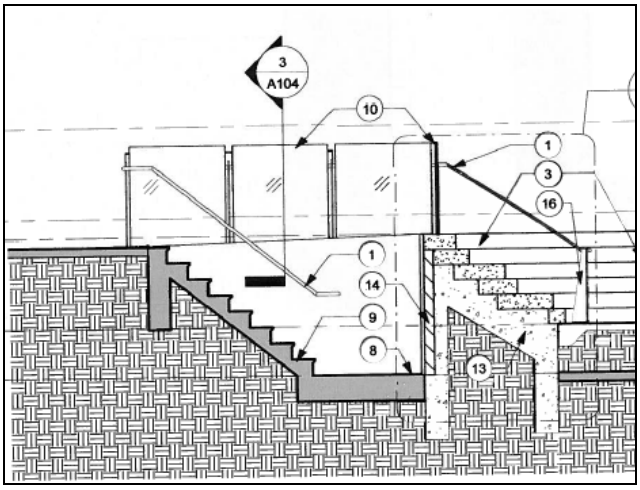


<u>Glass Exhibit Panels – Tradesman's Entrance</u>

Original Design:
The existing metal guard rails were to be replaced with an internally lit, solid plate glass exhibit panel fabricated in a frosted safety glass.



Current Design:
The existing metal guard rails are being replaced with three, separate, externally lit, glass exhibit panels fabricated in a slightly frosted glass. The support detail for these panels is for its form to replicate an ice tool.



Ice Well Viewing Windows

Frameless, operable, lockable clear, low iron glass with an anti-reflective coating will be installed in the Ice Well's viewing windows to promote the visibility of the resource and reduce glare. One of the glass panels will be fixed.

Changes to Brick Sidewalk

A square, glass panel will be installed flush into the sidewalk directly above the center of the ice well, representing the location of the original access hatch, and symbolizing a block of ice.

Limits of Disturbance - Archaeology

The proposed design will have very minimal impacts to undisturbed earth. The applicant has provided a drawing indicating the Limits of New Disturbance for the project (see Figure 12). The shaded area in the drawing indicates where the Applicant proposes to cut into earth that has not already been previously impacted. As shown, these areas are very minimal, and will be monitored by City Archaeology staff.

Accessibility

The historic context and physical constraints of the site will not allow for a handicap accessible ramp, however, the proposed design does provide reasonable accommodation. The exhibit design will provide graphics and information at the sidewalk level, with visual contrast and legibility to meet ADA requirements. Views into the ice well will be possible from the sidewalk level through a fixed glass panel, for museum patrons who cannot traverse steps. Graphic timelines mounted on a sloped rail are being designed for legibility for the visually impaired.

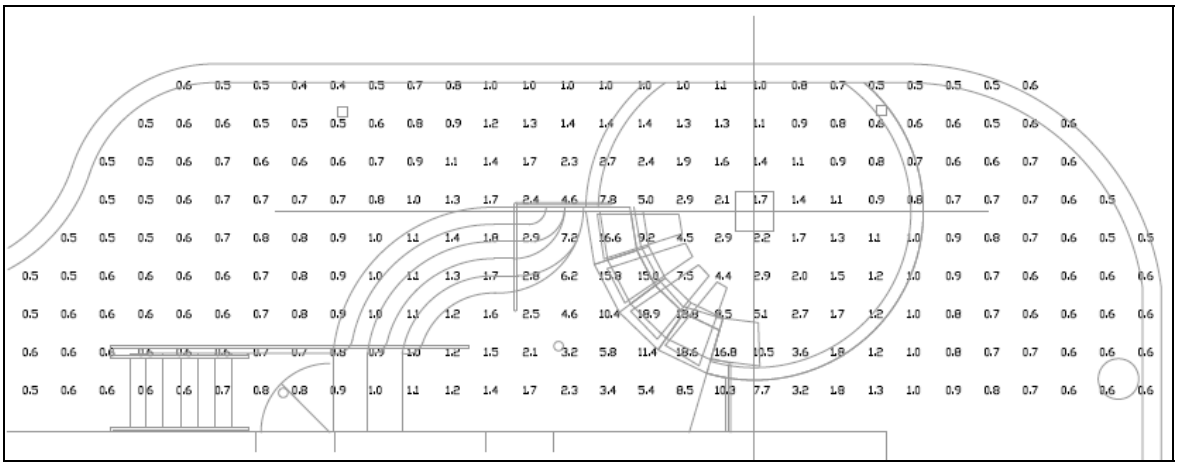
Ventilation

The current ventilation of the ice well is entirely passive. The new viewing windows will contain horizontal grills at the top and bottom to allow for natural convection.

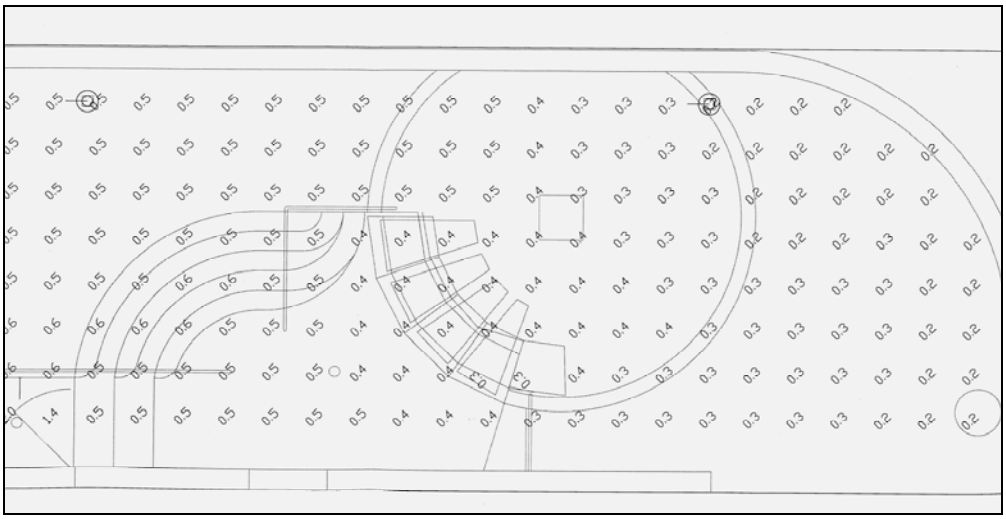
Lighting

Original Design:

The original lighting design provided a significant amount of light spillage beyond the ice well into the surrounding public Right-of-Way (ROW). It was the recommendation of Staff to reduce the lighting levels to mitigate the projects impact on pedestrians, drivers and the adjacent community. It was recommended that the Applicant attempt to achieve illumination levels of 0.6 footcandles or below in the public ROW.



Current Design:
The revised lighting design has changed dramatically from the original submittal. The glass panels will be lit utilizing low level LED lights. The new photometric plan illustrates that the lighting levels will not exceed the Staff recommended 0.5 footcandles at curb edge. A substantial reduction from the original design which had illumination levels reaching 1.1 footcandles at curb edge and well over 10 footcandles over the ice well opening.



The lighting proposed for inside the ice well will greatly enhance the visitor experience by highlighting the unique features identified by the museum curators as well as creating an overall illumination program for the resource. The interior lighting has been designed to be slightly brighter than its surroundings, as it is the focal point of the exhibit.

The exterior lighting proposed for the ice well will also improve the patron's daytime and evening visibility of the historic resource and complement and not compete with the existing lighting on the street.

The subject lighting design also proposes new, marker lights on the top of each stair on the new staircase to present pedestrians with a visual identification marker at the sidewalk level. The 'Tradesman's Entrance' staircase that serves the Tavern basement, and flanks the ice well, has also been integrated with marker lights to increase the lighting of this staircase and landing.

Stormwater

The current two (2) area drains connect to piping that enters the building and connects to a sump pump that ties into existing storm water piping (to be verified). The proposed design ties a new trench drain and the two (2) area drains into this same piping. The amount of impervious area and associated volume of water remains the same.

Materials

Metal Original:

The original submittal proposed handrails, hardware to be manufactured of a smooth, satin finish stainless steel. The other stainless steel would have been blast finished with a medium-toned, coarse aluminum oxide surface.

Metal Current:

The current submittal is proposing a metal handrail to be bronze with a dull finish and the vertical supports for the handrails to be manufactured of a dark grey finish stainless steel with texture.

Brick

The brick paving at the sidewalk level will retain the same configuration and materials, as per the standards set by the City of Alexandria.

Stone Original:

The steps and paving below the sidewalk level would have been a medium, brownish-grey granite.

Stone Current:

The steps and paving below the sidewalk level proposes to be a bluestone, as shown in the work session.

II. HISTORY/SITE DESCRIPTION:

History:

The ice well was probably constructed for tavern use in 1792 by John Wise, who consolidated several properties and enlarged or replaced the existing structures on the lot. The property was leased to John Gadsby from 1796 until 1808, during which time the City Tavern and Hotel became well-known for its generous hospitality.

Site Description

The historic tavern is located on an 11,106 sq. ft. lot and "L" shaped in form with a central private courtyard. Eight (8') foot wide sidewalks run along the property frontage. To preserve the tavern's associated ice well, the sidewalk is extended to 17.5' wide at the intersection of Cameron and North Royal Street. The resource is currently accessed by a set of brick stairs enveloped by a metal wrought iron railing. There are currently no identifying markers for the resource or interpretive signage at the site.

III. **ANALYSIS:**
The project complies with the zoning ordinance requirements.

The proposed alterations are intended to improve the appearance of the Ice Well, elevate the museum visitor's experience and promote two of the City's prominent historic artifacts. This new design provides less visual obstructions and enables the museum to convey the history of the resource without negatively impacting the historic fabric or the surrounding built environment. Additionally, the proposed materials were selected for their compatibility, yet differentiation, from the original historic fabric and their ability to be consistent with the museum's interpretation of the historic resource.

The text and graphics to be displayed on the glass exhibit panels are conceptual in form. It is recommended that the Board conceptually support the exhibit panel's graphics and text with the understanding that the applicant, their design team, and the City Archaeology and Historic Preservation Planning Staff will work to develop the final text and graphics to successfully design unique, historically accurate interpretive signage for this resource.

The new design will have very minimal impacts to undisturbed earth. The applicant only proposes to excavate a very small piece of earth that has not already been previously impacted. The remaining project will be fabricated on the existing site's footprint. As shown in the recommended conditions, the City Archaeology staff proposes to monitor all phases of the project to ensure the project maintains conformance to the strict Limits of Disturbance (LOD) and footprint.

Finally, all the proposed alterations are within the existing footprint of the site, as such, the pedestrian circulation pattern through and around the site will remain unaffected by this proposal.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application with the following conditions:

1. That the final design and historic accuracy of the text and graphics applied to the glass exhibit panels be reviewed and approved by the City Archaeology and Historic Preservation Planning staff;
2. That the applicant and their design team work with Historic Preservation Planning staff to refine the lighting program to ensure the lighting is compatible with the site and surrounding neighborhood, prior to the project's final permit inspections;
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V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-2 Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.

C-3 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

C-4 The new handrails must comply with USBC for a minimum/maximum height of 30 to 34 inches. The ends must extend 12" beyond the top and bottom risers. The handgrip position must not be more that 2-1/4" in cross-sectional dimension, or the shape must provide an equivalent gripping surface. The handgrip portion must have a smooth surface with no sharp corners. The space between the wall and handrail must not be less that 1-1/2".

C-5 Handrails must comply with USBC 1009.10.

C-6 The accessible ramp must comply with the requirements of USBC 1010.1. The front approach to the exterior door (which is on the pull side) must comply with the landing requirements of USBC 1010.6. Handrails must comply with USBC 1010.8

C-7 Ventilation requirements must comply with the requirements of International Mechanical Code.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

R-1 Approve.

VI. IMAGES:

Figure 1: ExistingView of Site

Figure 2: ExistingView of Site

Figure 3: Interior of Ice Well

Figure 4: Existing Evening View

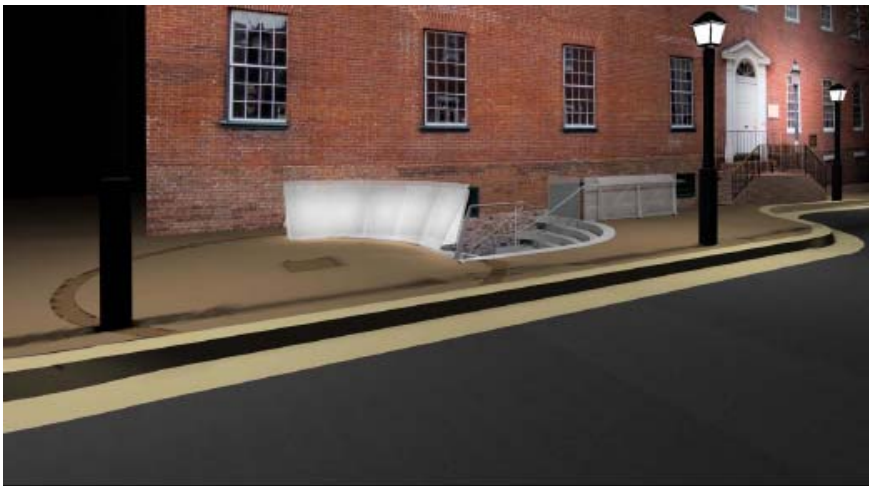

Figure 5: Original Design – Evening View

Figure 6: Current Design – Evening View

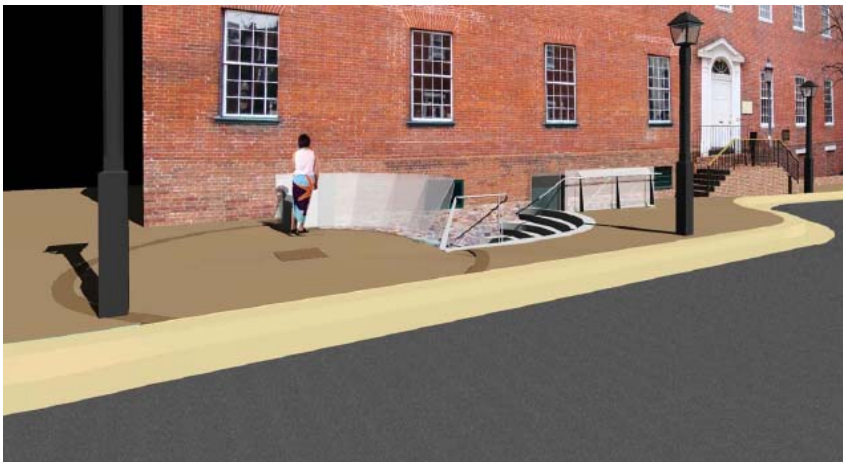

Figure 7: Original Design – Daytime View

Figure 8: Current Design – Daytime View

Figure 9: Ariel View of Original Design

Figure 10: Ariel View of Current Design

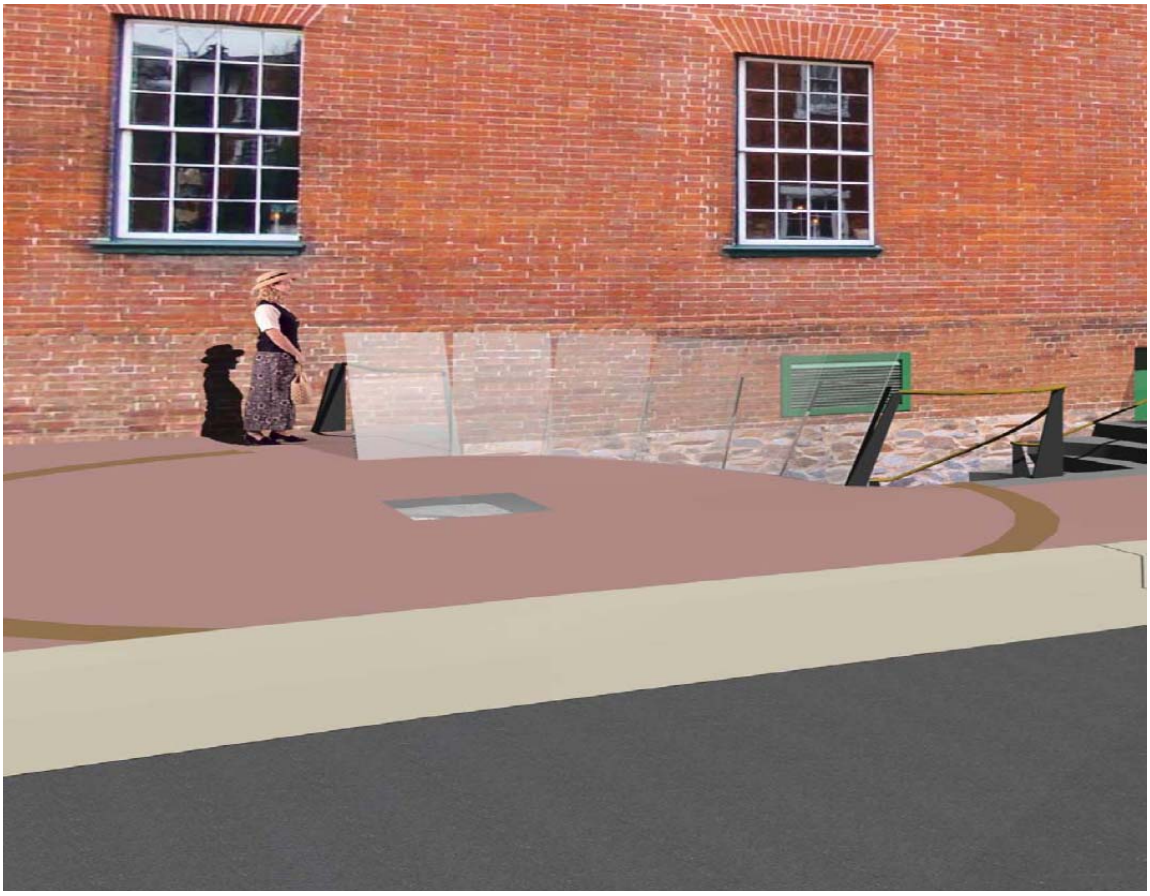

Figure 11: Sidewalk View of Current Design

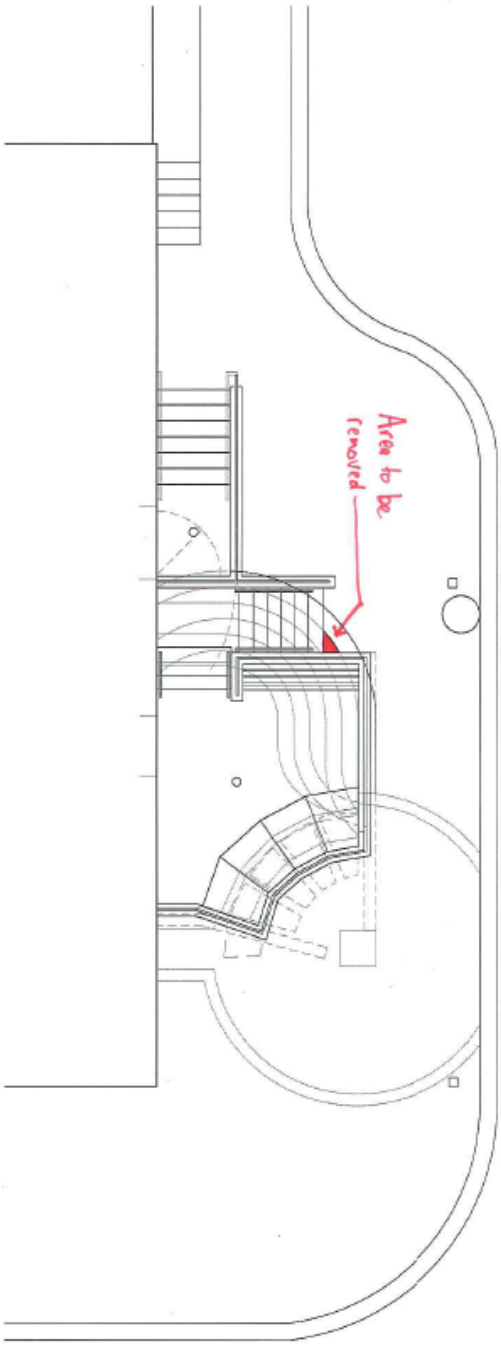

Figure 12: Archaeology Limits of Disturbance