

BAR Meeting
May 6, 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 is recommending approval of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness 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. 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;
3. 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;
4. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology; and,
5. 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.

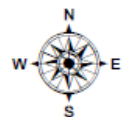
****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

****BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.



BAR CASE #2008-0235

5/6/2009



UPDATE:

Prior to the BAR's first public hearing, the ice well's design was presented to the Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission (HRPC) at their November 12, 2008, and the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission on December 16, 2008.

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 other citizens, and suggested the applicant meet with the individual board members.

After successful meetings with the applicant, the Board recommended a worksession to present a modified plan for additional informal commentary.

Prior to the February 4, 2009 worksession, the applicant was invited to the February 2, 2009 Historic Alexandria Foundation's Board Meeting to deliver a presentation of the proposed design and guide a walking tour of the site.

A public worksession 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.

Since the February worksession, the applicant has continued their outreach efforts with the local preservation and non-profit groups. These outreach efforts include:

- Chamber of Commerce, event at Gadsby's to promote museum (2/5/09)
- American Association of Museums President, Ford Bell meeting (2/10/09)
- American Legion Post #24 (met with Legion contact Warden Foley, (2/12/09)
- Old Town Civic Association, (Lance Mallamo made announcement of the public open house to be held on 2/17/09 & 2/17/09 and handed out 100 fliers at the 2/11/09 membership meeting. Invited to participate in the March 11, 2009 meeting to talk about Gadsby's and OHA preservation program.)
- Cameron and Royal Street neighbors, distributed open house flyer (2/13/09)
- Cameron Street merchants, distributed open house flyer (2/13/09)

- Project promoted on OHA homepage (beginning 2/13/09 through present)
- Included in **This Week in Historic Alexandria** online resource, (week of 2/16/09)
- E-news blast to 1800 citizens on 2/12/09 about the public meeting of 2/17/09
- HAF Board private tour and discussion of plans (2/17/09 at 5:00pm.)
- Public Meeting, held at Gadsby's Tavern Museum (2/17/09)
- Antiques in Alexandria, Catalog ad promoting museum and ice well (3/5/09)
- Front page and subsequent **Alexandria Gazette** article detailing the project plan (3/5/09)
- Included in **This Week in Historic Alexandria** online resource, (week of 3/9/09)
- Alexandria Historic Society Board, presentation (3/10/09)
- E-news blast to 1800 citizens 2/24/09 to promote the public meeting of 3/12/09
- Public Meeting, held at Gadsby's Tavern Museum (3/12/09)
- ACVA Board Meeting, presentation (3/16/09)
- **Alexandria News** article, www.alexandrianews.org (3/29/09)
- Emails to HAF and/or OTCA to request meeting to discuss renovation plans with special ice well committee (3/16/09, 3/18/09, 4/16/09, 4/28/09)
- Society outreach, Tavern Dog Contest/Ice well fund raiser, Market Square display and four public announcements about Ice Well project (4/25/09)

I. ISSUES:

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:

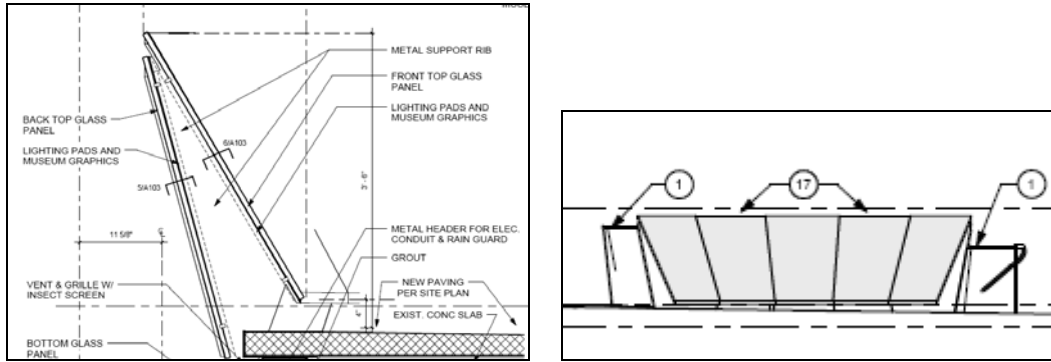
Viewing Area

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

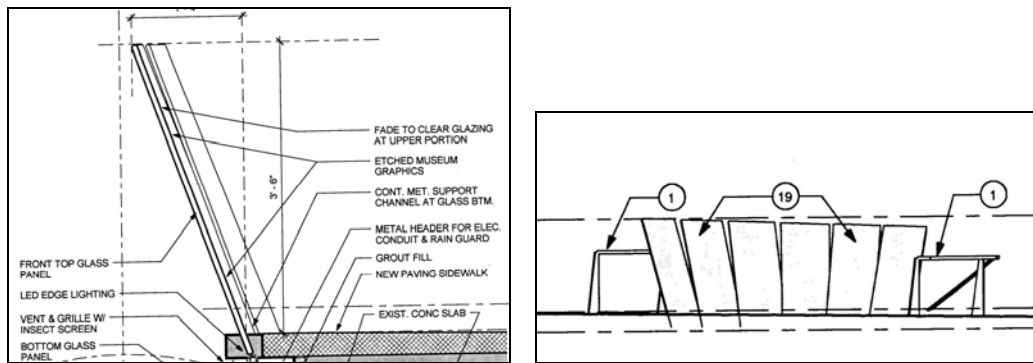
Original Design (December 2008):

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:

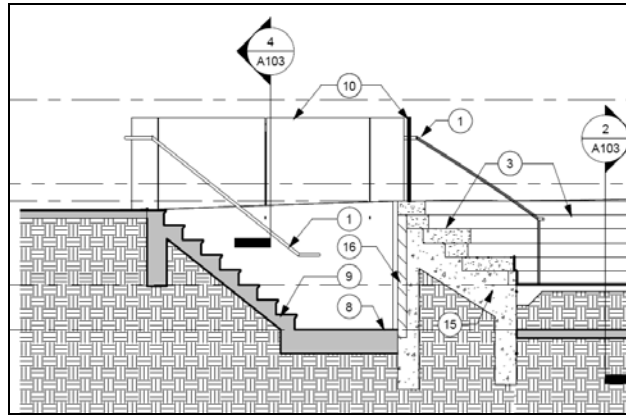
The existing metal guard rails are being replaced with separate, externally lit, glass exhibit panels fabricated in a clear safety glass. The glass display panels will be transparent, with the text and photo displays being etched into the glass. They will be supported through the use of a metal channel 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.



Glass Exhibit Panels – Tradesman’s Entrance

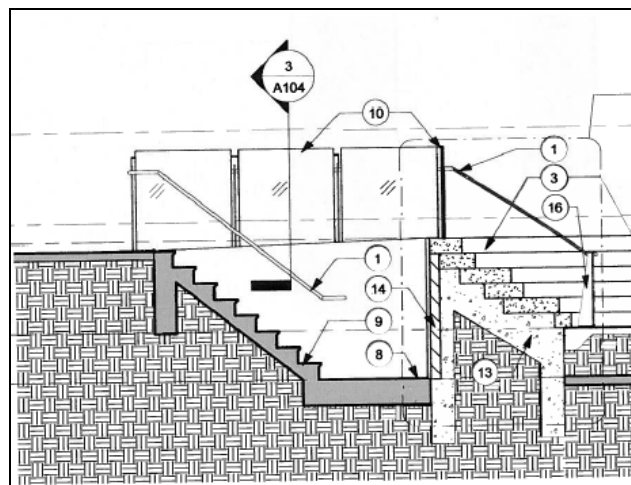
Original Design (December 2008):

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.

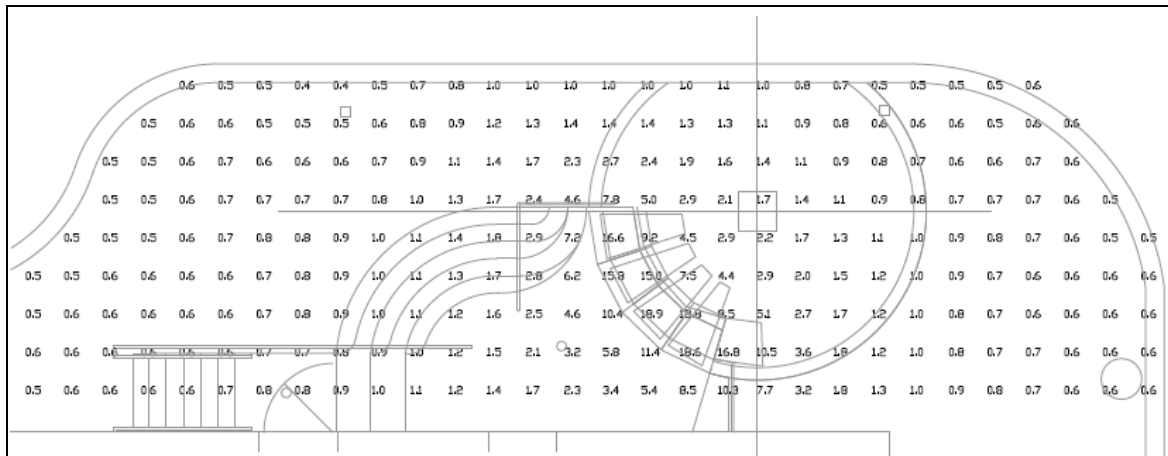
Ventilation

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 (December 2008):

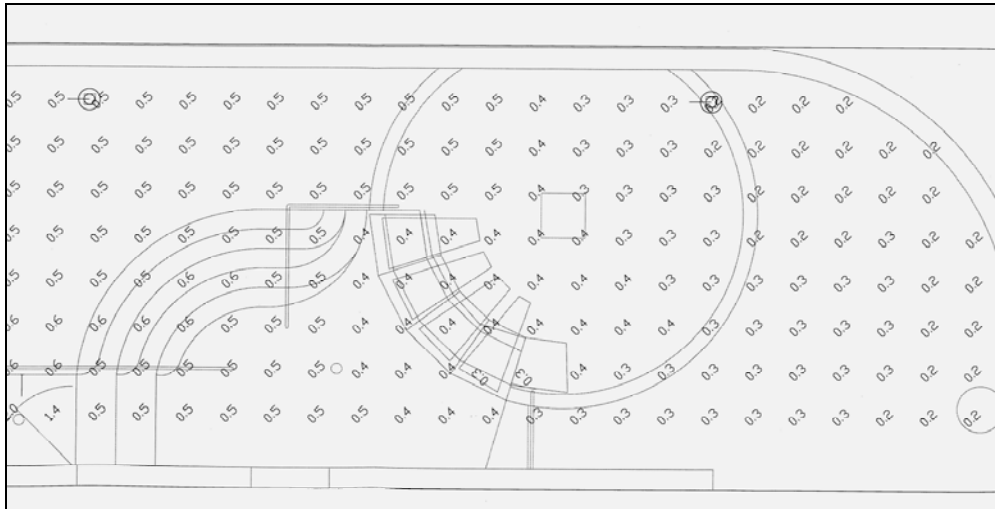
The original lighting design provided a significant amount of light spillage beyond the ice well into the surrounding public Right-of-Way (ROW). It was the recommendation of Staff to reduce the lighting levels to mitigate the projects impact on pedestrians, drivers and the adjacent community. It was 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 (December 2008):

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 (December 2008):

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 worksession.

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 support the medium for the exhibit panel's graphics and text with the understanding that Gadsby's Tavern Curatorial Staff, the Design Team, and the City Archaeology and Historic Preservation Planning Staff will work to develop the final text and graphics for this interpretive signage.

The new design will have very minimal impacts to undisturbed earth. The applicant only proposes to excavate a very small area which has not been previously impacted. The remaining project will be undertaken 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.

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.

While the *Design Guidelines* do not specifically contain an interpretive programming section, they do provide general preservation principals which can assist the Board in developing their decision. The first page of the *Guidelines* outlines the general intent of the document. It discourages the utilization of the *Guidelines* as "a device that dictates a specific design response or...as prohibiting a particular design approach." It does, however, promote the understanding that "there may be better ways to meet some design objectives that have not been reviewed by the Board's in the past" and explains that "new and untried approaches to common design problems are encouraged and should not be rejected out of hand simply because they appear to be outside the common practices outlined in the *Guidelines*" (*Guidelines Introduction*, Page 1).

Additionally, it should be noted that the *Guidelines* specify that they are "intended to be utilized only to provide direction and the Board is to consider each application on a case-by-case basis" (*Guidelines Use*, Page 1).

It is also the Old and Historic Alexandria District's purpose under its *Ordinance* "to seek to promote the education of the community....through the identification, preservation and enhancement of buildings, structures, landscapes, settings, neighborhoods, places and features with special historical, cultural, artistic and architectural significance." The *Ordinance* explains that the Board is to follow their mission by "protecting the historic district, including familiar landmarks and other treasured elements of the area," "protecting historical and cultural resources thus promoting tourism," and "educate residents and visitors about the City's cultural and historic heritage."

It is the Staff's opinion the above guidance supports the proposed program for the rehabilitation and interpretation of the ice well. There will be no adverse impacts to the historic integrity of the resource, the museum will be able to interpret the resource without negatively impacting the character-defining features of it or the surrounding historic resources and with the rehabilitation

program, the structure will be protected for future generations.

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. 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;
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4. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology; and,
5. 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.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C1. Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C2. 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.
- C3. 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.
- C4. 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 than 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 than 1-1/2".
- C5. Handrails must comply with USBC 1009.10.
- C6. 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
- C7. Ventilation requirements must comply with the requirements of International Mechanical Code.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

- R1. Approve.

VI. IMAGES:



Figure 1: Existing View of Site

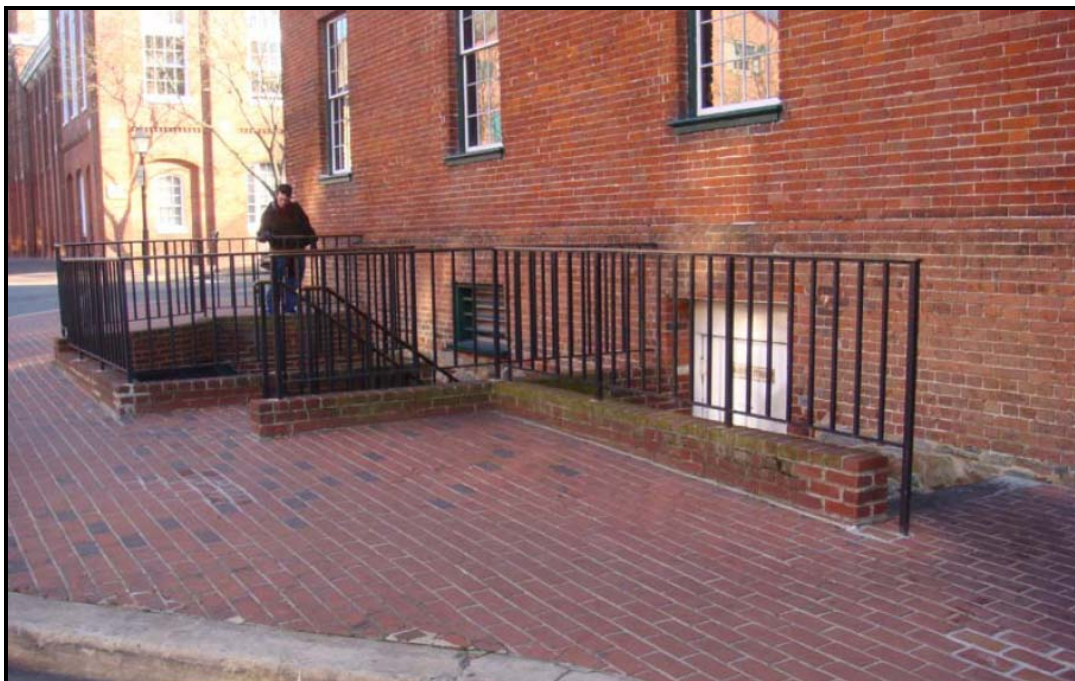


Figure 2: Existing View of Site



Figure 3: Interior of Ice Well



Figure 4: Existing Evening View



Figure 5: Original Design (December 2008) – Evening View



Figure 6: Current Design – Evening View



Figure 7: Original Design (December 2008) – Daytime View



Figure 8: Current Design – Daytime View



Figure 9: Ariel View of Original Design (December 2008)



Figure 10: Ariel View of Current Design



Figure 11: Sidewalk View of Current Design

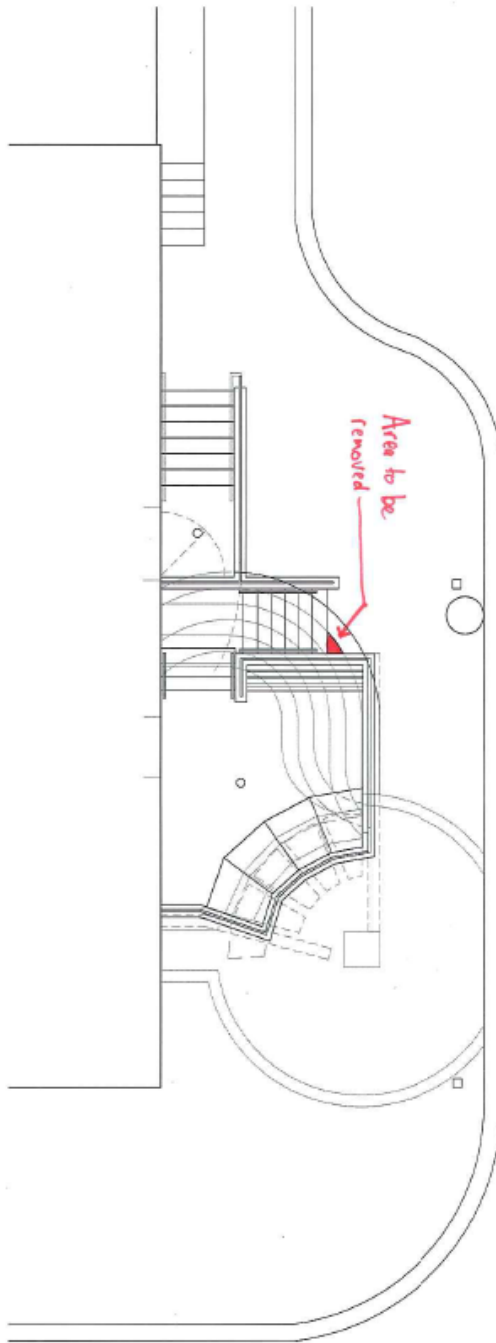


Figure 12: Archaeology Limits of Disturbance