

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 19, 2009

TO: Parker-Gray BAR Members

FROM: BAR Staff

SUBJECT: Comments for James Bland Phase II Work Session

Summary timeline:

September 2008: Approval of Permit to Demolish and Concept Approval (BAR Case #s 2008-0150/0151)

May 2009: Approval of Certificate of Appropriateness and Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement for Phase I of James Bland (BAR Case #s 2009-0088/0089)

April/May 2010: Target date for approval of Certificate of Appropriateness and Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement for Phase II of James Bland

Demolition status:

The applicant has completed the documentary requirement for obtaining the demolition permit.

Phase I status:

All of the building permits for the units in Phase I have been approved by P& Z staff.

Standard comments/conditions:

There are certain conditions which the BAR approved with the Certificate of Appropriateness for Phase I which will be brought forward – sometimes with modifications – in subsequent BAR approvals. Staff will recommend that the following conditions be carried over from the Phase I BAR approval to the Phase II approval:

1. *That all visible roof materials (including porch roofs) be standing seam metal, metal shingles, or slate or synthetic slate.* (Five units appear to have a different roof material on the front elevation – architectural grade composition shingle. See discussion below under Building 13).

2. *That the applicant work with Staff to refine the door, window and trim treatments so that they are stylistically compatible and do not have a mix of styles on a single townhouse. (As new unit designs are proposed the applicant should continue to work closely with Staff to ensure that they are stylistically compatible with the Parker-Gray historic district as well as the other phases of development. Phase II appears to comply).*
3. *That the applicant continue to revise the cornice design to be historically appropriate in respect to depth, profile, and details and to provide samples of all proposed prefabricated cornices for final approval by Staff. (See comment #2 above. Phase II appears to comply.).*
4. *That the applicant eliminate the cluster mailboxes and provide mail slots through the door to be compatible with the character of the district. Should the only possible solution for mail delivery be cluster mailboxes, then the applicant should revise the location and design of the proposed mailbox units to minimize their visibility and to be more compatible, with final approval by Staff. The best efforts shall be made to not locate any cluster mailboxes on North Columbus Street and to provide individual delivery to these units. (The USPS would not allow for individual mail slots so the development must have cluster mailboxes. The applicant should provide the design and location of these cluster mailboxes when the Phase II plans are submitted for Certificate of Appropriateness approval. Staff approved the final location and design of the cluster mailboxes in Phase I).*
5. *That the applicant use appropriate building materials, such as wood, composite, or synthetic materials which are high-quality, paintable and solid throughout, for items such as door surrounds, front doors, railings and the like. Front doors shall be wood. (Staff will bring samples of the synthetic materials approved for Phase I construction to the work session. Phase II appears to comply.).*
6. *Fireplace vents, flues, vent stacks and other similar protrusions shall not be permitted on any public street or private street frontage including corner units. Furnace vents shall discharge through the roof or the rear façade. HVAC vents or associated elements shall not be visible from a public street and shall be painted to match the predominant building color. Roof penetrations shall be confined to the rear of the building. (The approved DSUP does allow for some vents to be installed on the front facade, at the discretion of the Director of P&Z. In Phase II, Lots #19-#24 show a limited number of small painted louvered vents on the front façade which Staff believes are acceptable).*
7. *That the applicant construct sidewalks along the public streets that will be six foot wide unobstructed with a minimum four foot wide landscape strip. All sidewalks are to be concrete, comply with the City standards, and include "lamp black" color additive per the Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan. All public street sidewalks shall have a 3-foot by 3-foot grid pattern. The concrete sidewalks and grid pattern shall continue over the proposed alleys and private streets to provide*

- a continual uninterrupted concrete sidewalk.* (This is consistent with a Development Special Use permit condition.).
8. *That the low fence meet the requirements of the zoning ordinance regarding being 50% open with final approval by Staff.* (When submitting BAR plans for Phase II approval, the applicant should show the location of the front fences and include the proposed fence designs).
 9. *In the event that any of the rooftop HVAC units are found to be visible from any public right-of-way after installations, that they shall be appropriately screened subject to final approval by Staff.* (Staff will recommend that this condition be modified so that if HVAC units are visible, that the applicant work with Staff in the field to move the units so that they are not visible or located in the most subtle location.).

Additional discussion points:

Reminder: mass, height, scale and general architectural character was determined during concept review.

Overall comments -

- In order to provide continued variety, Staff would encourage the applicant to add another Late Victorian style wood door to the door schedule – a simple 4 panel wood door with taller upper panels. This door type is very common within the Parker-Gray historic district and can be used to provide additional variety within the development.
- The use of rooftop solar collectors and panels has been brought up by the applicant. Staff strongly supports this in concept and encourages the applicant to submit a representative drawing of the solar panel and their proposed locations. Per the *Design Guidelines*, solar collectors should be located in the most visually inconspicuous area of a structure and be as small as possible. This could be something covered under a blanket Certificate of Appropriateness approval, with staff review in the field.
- Staff supports the applicant’s simplification of the loft feature between Phase I BAR approval and Phase II, but would like to see this element have subtle color that allows it to visually recede. When submitting for BAR approval, the applicant should submit color renderings to confirm that this will be done.
- Are any changes proposed to the materials or color palette for Phase II? (Staff will bring the Phase I color & material sample board to the work session).

Building specific comments:

Building 17 (Lots 1-5)

- Between Lot 1 & 2 at the cornice level there is a square feature – what is this? Staff could not locate a detail of this area. This feature occurs often throughout the development.

Building 16 (Lots 6-13)

- Lot 12. The use of standing seam metal on buildings designed in a Late Victorian Second Empire style would historically not have had standing seam metal roofs. Rather, their roofs would have been clad with either stamped metal shingles or slate shingles. Staff would prefer to see the use of slate shingles or punched metal shingles in place of the standing seam metal roof on some of the units which have standing seam metal, in particular on Lot 12 to break up the three adjoining standing seam metal roofs and to differentiate the architecture on this unit.

Building 13 (Lots 19-24)

- All units facing Montgomery Street will have small louvered vents painted to match the siding. See the discussion above under #6.
- Lots 19, 20 & 21 have architectural grade composition roofs which are inconsistent with a Phase I condition requirement that all visible roof materials be standing seam metal, metal shingles, or slate or synthetic slate. Staff recommends that these roofs have one of the approved roof materials.

Building 14

- Lots 25 & 26. See discussion for Lots 19, 20 & 21 above.

Building 15 & 18 (Lots 30-35, Lots 36-40)

- Alley units. Staff strongly encourages the applicant to make minor modifications to the design of the alley units so that there is variety between these identical buildings from phase to phase. The applicant has done an excellent job varying the design of the townhouse units, both within each phase of development as well as between phases. While the scale and mass of the alley buildings will not change, perhaps material or fenestration changes can be considered at each phase of development. In particular, Staff suggests that the character of the Art Deco/Streamline Moderne structures in the Parker-Gray be used as inspiration.

Building 12 & 19

- No discussion items.