



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING, HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

Neighborhood Services Division

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DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD

**Wednesday, July 15, 2015
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
County Board Room**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joan Lawrence, Chairman
Charles Matta, Vice Chairman
Charles Craig
Craig Deering
Robert Dudka
Gerry Laporte
Tova Solo
Kevin Vincent
AndrewWenchel
Richard Woodruff

MEMBERS EXCUSED: GregHolcomb
Mark Turnbull

STAFF: Cynthia Liccese-Torres, Program Coordinator
Rebecca Ballo, Preservation Planner

ROLL CALL & CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm. Ms. Ballo called the roll and determined there was a quorum.

MEETING MINUTES FROM JUNE 17, 2015

The Chairman called for a motion or comments on the June meeting minutes. Mr. Dudka requested one change to the minutes. Ms. Solo moved to approve the amended June 17, 2015, meeting minutes. Mr. Craig seconded the motion and it passed 7-0-1 (Mr. Woodruff abstained; Mr. Vincent and Mr. Deering had not yet arrived).

PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS (CoAs)

The Chairman reviewed the public hearing procedure regarding speaker slips. She stated that there was one item on the consent agenda and none on the discussion agenda. The Chairman asked for a motion on the consent agenda. Mr. Woodruff moved to approve the consent agenda; Mr. Laporte seconded and the motion passed 8-0.

Mr. Woodruff asked for more information regarding the tree that was removed via Administrative CoA. Ms. Ballo said she would follow up via email. Ms. Ballo briefly stated that the “temporary” neon sculpture at the Maury School had been removed. It would be refurbished by the artist and reinstalled elsewhere in the region. New art, yet to be determined, will be planned for this location on the building.

CONSENT AGENDA (CoAs):

- 1) 2831 23rd Road North
 Peter Dabrowski & Stacy Puente
 Maywood Historic District
 HALRB Case 15-08 (HP1500015)
 An after-the-fact request to replace two, six-over-six simulated divided lite vinyl windows with one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl-sash windows.

DISCUSSION AGENDA None.

ADMINISTRATIVE COAs

- 1) 3550 Wilson Boulevard
 Arlington County, Department of Economic Development
 Maury School Historic District
 ACoA 15-04
 Request for temporary public art exhibit.
- 2) 2733 23rd Road North
 John Daley
 Maywood Historic District
 ACoA 15-05 (HP1500013)
 Request to remove a 32-inch northern red oak.

Discussion Item: Carver Homes Historic Markers & Park Naming

Ms. Stefanie Smith with Elm Street Development and Sandra Malm with Craftmark presented the proposed historic markers for the Carver Homes site. These markers are required by the condition of the use permit that was approved allowing for the demolition of the garden apartment complex and construction of new stacked townhouses. One marker focuses on the history of the cooperative community, while the second focuses on the architect of the community, Albert Cassell. The first marker will be a table top marker; the second will feature a bas-relief portrait of the architect in metal and will be a standard metal shield type marker, similar to the more traditional highway markers. The proposed text was taken from a draft National Register nomination for the complex and from records at Howard University. Photographs were obtained from residents, from the National Archives, and from Arlington County. Ms. Smith also presented a map that showed the proposed location of the markers in the new park that will be created in the community.

Mr. Dudka and others noted that the bas-relief idea for the marker is a very nice touch and will be very appropriate.

Mr. Vincent stated that the African-American landowners who owned the property earlier (the Greens and Johnsons) should be identified as such. Mr. Vincent also stated that the markers should primarily be about place and not about people. Mr. Craig asked if there were other photos that could be used. Ms. Malm stated that the top left photos will be color and the bottom left one can be obtained at a higher resolution. Mr. Craig noted that the personal photos should be color corrected in Photoshop to reduce the glare. Mr. Dudka suggested that the context of the apartments could be better shown with an aerial photograph of the apartment complex instead of the photos showing just the Pentagon and Arlington House. Mr. Woodruff asked if more work could be done to obtain more compelling photos. Mr. Wenchel suggested that if a photo of Arlington House is included, that a more recent one be obtained. He also suggested basic edits for the margins, text crowding, and the overall layout. The Chairman noted some words that required hyphenation: “co-op” not “coop”; “Board-member” not “Board member”.

Several HALRB members noted that it would be nice to try to obtain more personal photos. The Chairman also suggested condensing the history and really focusing on the apartments themselves, and maybe including a QRC code for further information about the area. Ms. Solo asked if a map of Freedman’s Village could be included. Ms. Ballo directed the applicant to ask NPS directly for an image of that map. The HALRB agreed to give comments to the Chairman, who in turn would pass them on to the applicant. The applicant will return in August for final approval. There was consensus for fewer photos and more text. The Chairman thanked the applicants.

Ms. Bethany Heim, staff with DPR, presented the park naming item. The civic association recommended the new park be named “George Washington Carver Park”. Mr. Laporte pointed out, and the HALRB agreed, that the name does not encompass everything the civic association wanted to honor: both the George Washington Carver Apartments and George Washington Carver himself. Mr. Vincent moved to support the proposed name. Mr. Matta seconded and the motion passed 9-0; Mr. Deering did not arrive until 8:15 pm.

Discussion Item: Work Session with Arlington Public Schools on Stratford School Addition

The Chairman welcomed Mr. John Chadwick and Mr. Bill Herring, Arlington Public Schools (APS) staff, and Mr. Carl Elefante and Ms. Katie Irwin from Quinn Evans Architects. Mr. Chadwick introduced the project and presented a new timeline showing the BLPC/PFRC process. Ms. Irwin presented highlights of the project thus far, and presented background information that the HALRB has seen at previous meetings. There were slides on the historical background of the school, the architectural style and architect, integration week, and the site landscape. She also showed a slide with the newer additions and alterations. Mr. Matta asked whether the school was originally built for 690 students. Mr. Chadwick replied it was built for 1,000 students, but teaching needs have changed. Mr. Matta asked that if it was built for 1,000 students, then the infrastructure was built to handle that capacity as well? Mr. Elefante stated that was generally true, but in the case of the roads, driving habits have changed since the 1950s. Ms. Irwin presented the Guiding Principles for the project as approved by the County Board in June. She then described the character-defining features for the exterior and interior of the building, along with the relevant Secretary of the Interior’s Standards that should be applicable to the project.

Mr. Elefante explained the site context and the site options thus far. He described Burket’s idea of form following function and showed how that was expressed in each of the purpose built sections of the school. He showed slides of various circulation schemes, noting both opportunities and site challenges. He also presented previous massing options. Ms. Irwin noted that the Phase 1 addition will have classrooms, as well as space for auxiliary functions and electives.

The Chairman stated that in her experience as a former teacher, the A3 option could make a perfect dedicated wing just for the 6th graders. Mr. Chadwick replied that APS is looking for more adaptability than that in their schools, and that site option was removed from consideration by the BLPC. Mr. Elefante explained the reason that option was removed; the issues dealt with student circulation and a narrow hallway connection with the existing school. It is also an issue that the site is located within the RPA. Mr. Elefante then presented in depth on the 3 remaining site options and the various road options still under consideration.

First he presented the “Terrace Scheme”, or Option C2. He explained the massing and development of this scheme. It connects to the existing building at the basement level and the upper floor is at the level of the classroom wing. There is a new vertical connection that ties back into the existing school. The new main entrance leads to the stairs that go to the gym. The rear would become the main entrance to the building and creates a new “heart” of the school. Some options move the media center and some do not.

Next Mr. Elefante presented the “Link Scheme”, or Option C3. This option was presented as the initial scheme to the School Board when the site was under consideration for the new neighborhood middle school. Mr. Elefante also mentioned that the road and building schemes as presented do not necessarily have to go together, there can be some “mixing and matching” involved. While the Terrace Scheme is stretched out and 2 floors lower, the Link is the full height of the existing building. There is a glass atrium over the newly created courtyard that would be the “heart of school” in this iteration. He presented a glass “window” that could be cut in the side of the addition that would be an attempt to offer some limited views to the interior of the courtyard, in the area where the students first integrated the school.

Lastly, Mr. Elefante presented the “Hill Scheme”, or Option G2. This option suppresses all new construction in the immediate rear of the school to below grade and clusters the rest of the development around the gymnasium wing. The media center that is being shown built into the hillside is a placeholder; it also could be a space for an auxiliary gym. It is trying to take advantage of the building opportunity to link up with the 2004 Music Wing so that it is not so isolated from the school.

Mr. Elefante then showed the massing schemes all together and how the massing impacted the viewsheds of the site. He showed perspectives from Old Dominion, the field, and from the east.

Ms. Ballo also gave a brief presentation, noting the staff concerns for each option, in particular the C3 option which does not, upon examination, meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

Mr. Craig gave an update from the last BLPC meeting, where there was interest expressed in examining an option on the western side of the school, over the existing DPR parking lot. Mr. Craig asked why the G2 option could not move over to the parking lot. Mr. Elefante replied that this breaks “the rule” [his emphasis] that the addition not touch the County property. Mr. Dudka pointed out that the adopted Guiding Principles from the County Board specifically state that options may be considered for the County’s Park property. Ms. Liccese-Torres confirmed that was the case.

Mr. Dudka quoted the Secretary’s Standards and stated that in his opinion as a preservation architect, none of the schemes really preserve the original entrance area from integration. The virtue of placing an addition at either end of the existing school is that you preserve the entirety of what is important for the cultural history of the site. This [rear] area should be accessible to everyone in Arlington and the nation, not just the students. He felt that all the schemes presented tonight are problematic in some way, but some are

better than others. He said that C3 totally obliterates the rear, and the glass connection excludes the community. Option C2, however, does preserve some sense of the rear elevation from Old Dominion.

Mr. Matta stated that he appreciates what the architects have gone through in terms of trying out various options. From his perspective, C3 is very weak. It does not take into account the value of historic preservation and cultural history. G2 is reminiscent of Aero Saarinen and there may be some value in exploring it. There is an opportunity here to bring the gym into the hill, since the gym does not need light on all 4 sides. The gym could open onto the field and there is unexplored potential here. This could be integrated into C2 and would help minimize that option.

Mr. Vincent stated he was rereading the charge from the County Board. Those [rear] entrances are critical historic features and the rear of the building must be preserved. Each proposed option has serious adverse impacts. He urged APS to look at the park property. It is a disservice to this building and the mission of this public process if they only consider 3 bad options.

Mr. Craig stated that before this project, his only experience of the building was viewing it from Old Dominion. Any solution that inverts the relationship of the front and the rear of the building fails Standards 9 and 10 and the charge from the County Board.

Ms. Ballo briefly discussed the transportation options and the recommendation from DES staff that an “A” option for the road, one that does not include an Old Dominion access point, be sent forward for consideration. This recommendation was made because approval from VDOT is not guaranteed and there should be a backup option in that case.

Mr. Woodruff stated he was in agreement with the other Board members. He asked Mr. Chadwick why APS has not produced a design that places historic preservation issues as a site priority. Mr. Chadwick replied that APS has serious issues with placing both a Phase 1 and a Phase 2 on this site.

Mr. Deering stated that even though this is a concept plan, they have yet to see any real floorplans. If there are limitations with design options, they have not been adequately represented. As an architect, he has not seen enough information presented that would help HALRB or other groups make suggestions to overcome the site limitations. Mr. Chadwick stated that APS has explained the limitations, but agreed that the west side had not been explored. Mr. Chadwick did note that a west option would require structured parking and may jeopardize a Phase 2. They also want daylight to as many spaces as possible.

Ms. Ballo asked for clarification on the budget for parking. Mr. Chadwick stated they have not factored structured parking into the budget. The Chairman noted that constructing a road really challenges the budget. Mr. Chadwick agreed and added that escalating construction costs are also a factor.

There was more discussion about designing a west option. Mr. Elefante stated that until June the guidance was not to go over the property line, but now there has been a major rule change. Mr. Vincent stated that the designers should take full advantage of this opportunity to design something new. The Chairman urged APS to look at a new option, or even adjust the C2 option to take into account more potential land that could be available.

There was more discussion regarding transportation options and questions about traffic and queueing on the roads.

Mr. Elefante pointed out that in the C3 scheme you can walk up to the door used by the students the first day. Ms. Ballo stated that was an unnecessarily reductive way to think about historic preservation of a building and a moment in time. Mr. Deering stated that, in his remembrance of a Churchill quote, it has been said that, “First we shape our buildings and then our buildings shape us.” He said that the experience of the week of integration cannot be adequately preserved in any of the schemes as presented. He asked the architects how they were balancing their charge. Mr. Elefante replied that the one door is still intact. Mr. Dudka reiterated that was a reductionist way to think of the building, and such thinking does not address the totality of the charge given for the site or the program. Mr. Deering stated that it is not just the experience of walking over the sill, but the entire experience of approaching the school from Old Dominion. He stated that the C3 option is entirely unsupportable and that it does not meet the County’s charge. He stated that opportunities should be developed for the west side though a more compact circulation pattern may be given up.

There was a brief discussion of the project timeline for the rest of the summer. Mr. Woodruff asked why no designs had been brought to the School Board yet, and similarly, why no School Board vote on the local historic district designation. Mr. Chadwick stated that cost was a factor, and also the APS staff desired to align the BLPC, PFRC, and HALRB on a concept design.

Mr. Laporte asked for clarification on the timing of the VDOT proposal. Mr. Chadwick stated they were not in a position to formally submit that application.

There was further discussion about the size of the school and the additions relative to the County middle school population.

The Chairman concluded the discussion and asked that HALRB members offer specific guidance for the APS team. She began by stating that the area where Phase 2 is mostly depicted, on the DPR parking lot, should be explored as a Phase 1 location. She recommended the removal of the C3 option as it is the least compatible with historic preservation. She stated C2 could work if modified and recommended exploring it further.

Mr. Craig asked to see as much of the addition as possible be put on the west end of the building and whatever remains be as low-rise and unobtrusive as possible.

Mr. Wenchel stated C3 should be removed from consideration. It requires too great an impact to the field, and it inappropriately and radically alters the historic site. As a historic architect, he also finds the desired circulation pattern of a “loop” to be incompatible with the original design intent. Hyphens should be used to connect to the historic building as lightly as possible. The design should respect the architect’s original intent to embrace the landscape. Also, he advised APS to strongly reconsider the cut-through road option and think about those grades. A 7% grade or greater could become dangerous.

Mr. Craig stated he was in accord with previous Board comments and had nothing further to add.

Mr. Matta stated that C3 is really a non-starter from a historic preservation perspective. Separating the building from the field with a road is undesirable. C2, if further developed with a smaller footprint, with options looking at the current gym or over the current gym, could be explored and improved. C2 has the most potential to be a sensitive option.

Ms. Solo recommended a better iteration of the C2 option be explored, and also to reexamine the A options.

Mr. Dudka commended the architects for their thorough study of C3, but stated it does not meet historic preservation standards for the site. Of the schemes presented, C2 has the most potential, though it greatly changes the relationship of the building to the landscape. The scheme on the County land has the most potential. The design team should consider reexamining A3 as well.

Mr. Laporte stated that G2 appears to be the least sympathetic. C2 has the most potential, but appears complicated. C3 does not work for the reasons already articulated. He reiterated this building is nationally known for its architecture as well as its place in civil rights history, and that should also be preserved through a compatible design.

Mr. Vincent stated elements of all 3 schemes work, but taken as a whole each scheme is not acceptable or appropriate. He recommended developing an option that crosses the property line and/or reconsiders the A3 option. All options presented have serious adverse impacts.

Mr. Woodruff agreed with Mr. Vincent's statements. He questioned whether the damage to the [historic] building is necessary purely for an optimal circulation pattern.

Mr. Chadwick stated that there were serious criticisms from the community when this site was originally chosen. He noted that the site has been difficult for construction and design since the 1950s and current staff is being forced to deal with many of these same issues. Staff is likely to present a number of options to the School Board with cost estimates.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Chadwick and Mr. Elefante for their participation with the HALRB. The Board members stated as a group they were looking forward to commenting on the next iterations.

REPORTS OF CHAIRMAN, STAFF AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Due to the late hour, staff offered to send these updates to the HALRB via email. The HALRB agreed and there was no further business.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 pm.