



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, May 20, 2015
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Conference Rooms Cherry and Dogwood

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joan Lawrence, Chairman
Charles Matta, Vice Chairman
Charles Craig
Craig Deering
Robert Dudka
Gerry Laporte
Tova Solo
Mark Turnbull
Nathan Uldricks
Richard Woodruff

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Greg Holcomb
Kevin Vincent
Andrew Wenchel

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

ROLL CALL & CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:36 pm. Mr. Liebertz called the roll and determined there was a quorum.

INTRODUCTION OF CRAIG DEERING

The Chairman welcomed Craig Deering to the HALRB. Mr. Deering will not vote at the meeting due to administrative issues.

MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 15, 2015

The Chairman called for a motion or comments on the April meeting minutes. Mr. Dudka moved to approve the April 15, 2015, meeting minutes. Mr. Woodruff seconded the motion and it passed 5-0-2 (Mr. Craig and Mr. Turnbull abstained; Ms. Solo and Mr. Uldricks had not arrived).

PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS (CoAs)

The Chairman stated that there were no public hearing items and that there were three cases on the Consent Agenda. The Chairman called for a motion on the consent agenda. Mr. Laporte moved to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Matta seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (7-0).

CONSENT AGENDA (CoAs):

- 1) 2318 North Kenmore Street
Catherine & Salman Ahmed
Maywood Historic District
HALRB Case 15-04 (HP1500009)
Request to extend an existing deck on the rear of the house.

- 2) 303 North Glebe Road
Hugo R. Palma (tenant)
Buckingham Village Historic District
HALRB Case 15-05 (HP1500010)
Request to install new mechanical equipment on the roof.

- 3) 2210 North Nelson Street
Henry & Ann Kelly
Maywood Historic District
HALRB Case 14-23 (HP 1400041)
An after-the-fact request to: 1) extend the footprint and shed roof of the ca. 1981 covered porch on the south (side) elevation; 2) remove the ca. 1981 wrought iron railing and balustrade and replace with a wood railing and balustrade; and 3) screen-in the side porch.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

- 1) None

ADMINISTRATIVE COAs

- 1) None

WORK SESSION WITH ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF: STRATFORD JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The Chairman welcomed representatives of Arlington Public School (APS), including Scott Prisco (Director of Design and Construction, APS), John Chadwick (Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations, APS), Ben Burgin (Assistant Director, Design and Construction, APS), Carl Elefante (Principal, Quinn Evans Architects), and Atara Margolies (Project Architect, Quinn Evans).

Ms. Ballo introduced the project. She said that tonight we would discuss both the pending local historic district designation and the initial studies for the new additions and renovation to the school building. Ms. Ballo provided a fact sheet that outlined the historic aspects of the property and the upcoming project schedule. She noted that the Historic Preservation Program (HPP) received the district designation request in March 2015. Staff is quickly working to create the designation report and the associated historic district design guidelines.

Ms. Ballo referred the HALRB to the draft Guiding Principles document for Stratford School that Arlington County staff created for the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC). She asked the HALRB to use this document to inform any comments/analysis on tonight’s presentation by APS. She noted that the Guiding Principles are still in draft form and will be adopted by the County Board at a future date. She shared some historic photographs of the school to provide some basic context.

Ms. Ballo discussed the other committees who are currently reviewing the project, including the PFRC and the Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC). Both groups have reviewed the APS presentation and have offered feedback. This is the HALRB’s opportunity to offer similar comments on any aspects of the presentation.

The Chairman asked APS staff to start their presentation. Mr. Prisco noted that there is a newer draft of the Guiding Principles that removed the language regarding the “view of the back area.” Mr. Prisco stated this could be important for the HALRB’s perspective. Mr. Prisco proceeded with the presentation and stated that APS acknowledges the historic and architectural relevance of the Stratford School building. He added that the County’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) calls for 1,000 middle school seats to open in Fall 2019. APS is working diligently to have concept designs completed for the School Board’s review in Fall 2015.

Mr. Prisco introduced Carl Elefante, the project architect, who discussed the development of the project to this point. Mr. Elefante outlined the team’s progress on the Stratford School project. He shared the presentation made at the previous PFRC and BLPC meetings. He noted that Mr. Dudka and Mr. Craig serve on both committees. Mr. Elefante’s presentation included: 1) an overview of the building (general preservation concepts and terminology); 2) site analysis (transportation, open space, historic preservation, etc.); and 3) massing studies.

Mr. Elefante said the architects were utilizing the concepts from the Guiding Principles as an evaluation tool to ensure that efforts were consistent with these basic ideas. Mr. Elefante briefly outlined the architectural and historic context of Stratford School. He stated there have been minor modifications to the building’s relationship to the overall site. He then discussed the evolution of the building to its current form.

Ms. Margolies presented the site planning analysis and building massing options. She said the design exercise completed at the BLPC and PFRC led to four or five site options that are still under consideration. Mr. Elefante noted that transportation was a critical component discussed at the BLPC and PFRC meetings, along with open space preservation, open space optimization, and building siting/massing location. Ms. Margolies stated that the architects attempted to avoid or minimally impact the adjacent Stratford Park property to the greatest possible extent. The site options presented were ranked with a rudimentary economic analysis (between one dollar sign to four dollar signs). She then presented and discussed the benefits and disadvantages to the different transportation options in terms of school planning. She noted that the forthcoming transportation analysis may further impact the site planning solutions.

During Ms. Margolies’s presentation of the transportation schemes, Mr. Prisco added that the H-B Woodlawn Program has a non-traditional pick-up/drop-off. At a traditional school (the future use of the site), there is the potential for bus backup on the neighborhood streets as the buses line up. Transportation solutions should account for such potential issues. Ms. Margolies stated that the architects will be looking at how to optimize the renovation to coordinate with best practices for pick-up/drop-off.

Ms. Margolies introduced potential building locations for additions at the Stratford School property. Additions on the main facade were not considered and adequate spaces were left for athletic fields, parking, etc. She noted that Phase One construction efforts require the retention or addition to the number of overall parking spaces. Mr. Elefante added that the parking lot to the west of the building is not located on APS property, but on Arlington County park property. Ms. Margolies noted that the parking lot on the northeastern section of the property has great access to Vacation Lane and is a location to either retain parking or improve the drop-off scenario. She said placing a building there would require the relocation of parking further into the site, which does not make sense in a site planning analysis. In general, she discussed the importance of the efficiency of moving students between the existing and proposed additions. She added that the site location options show the flexibility for a second building phase.

Ms. Margolies then presented specific potential building sites in relation to transportation and massing. Mr. Elefante said one of the purposes of these options was to show the BLPC and PFRC that transportation options will impact building massing/design solutions.

The Chairman requested additional details for the option where the massing allowed for greater visibility of the rear of the historic building. She requested details of the proximity of the new proposed road to the building. Ms. Margolies listed the approximate distance of the road from the building and athletic fields. Mr. Elefante noted that the next HALRB work session will include preferred site plans and more detailed, specific options. He added that it is still early in the process and now is a great time to receive feedback. Additional data (transportation information, historic district guidelines, etc.) that will allow for a more detailed analysis will be available shortly.

Mr. Dudka commented that the emphasis of the project team has been an analysis of transportation issues. However, there is a lack of analysis specifically from a historic preservation point of view. The team has not considered the benefits and/or disadvantages in regards to how the schemes impact the existing historic building and overall site. Mr. Dudka also pointed out that there are no current schemes that are generated from the perspective of historic preservation.

Mr. Elefante stated that the project team is waiting to receive the character-defining features and historic district guidelines prior to making such assumptions. Mr. Dudka suggested that the project team, as historic preservation architects, are qualified to discuss what aspects of the building are historically important.

Mr. Prisco interjected the goals and priorities of the BLPC and PFRC committees. He stated that the priority is the safety and receiving of students at the school. At this time of the process, these transportation ideas are critical to the big picture. He added that the adjacent property is County-owned land and that the rights to build on this location will jeopardize the 2019 completion date. He reiterated that the team is still at the beginning of the process.

Mr. Dudka responded that by the time historic preservation is considered as part of the process, APS will have decided on the location of the addition without a real analysis of its impact on the existing historic building. He added that all of the locations that have been presented are all imposed by transportation concerns without consideration of historic preservation. At this site, however, historic preservation should not be a tertiary issue.

Mr. Deering asked for some clarifications. He stated that on June 29, 2015, the BLPC is expected to have a preferred concept and conclusions. He noted that the timeline will allow the HALRB to only have input on facade elements and materials, not massing or site location. Mr. Deering had expected Quinn Evans to

analyze each option in relation to the Guiding Principles (specifically bullets #2-5 dealing with historic preservation). He stated that the HALRB has two considerations: the building's association with historic events and the building's architectural value. Mr. Deering suggested that the concepts as shown failed to address these considerations.

The Chairman asked if Quinn Evans examined placing a building on the parking lot on Vacation Lane. Mr. Elefante responded that while the process is transportation driven, the project team will make parking requirements work. All the options, however, suggest that the solution must be respectful of historic preservation. He reexamined the potential solutions in terms of transportation and circulation. He noted that the [2005] Fine Arts addition dictated that future additions be parallel to the central school block. The architects don't have to respond to this site layout, but that is what the architects of the Fine Arts addition intended. Benefits from such a configuration included creating a preferred circulation loop/pattern for students instead of a long, linear footprint.

Ms. Ballo requested that APS analyze the distances between spaces at other existing middle schools in the County and optimal distances for student circulation.

Mr. Chadwick provided his analysis of the school and noted that the rear elevation of the building retains significance. He added that the rear elevation is more architecturally interesting than the front façade. He added that APS, however, has very limited options and needs the HALRB's reactions to the proposed solutions. He noted that future analysis in terms of circulation is a critical aspect of school design, but recognized that APS and HALRB need to work through these design challenges together.

Mr. Craig stated that the central tower of glass block on the rear elevation is a major aspect of the building. He hoped that nothing would be attached to this central location. Mr. Chadwick stated that the requirements of the school dictated an addition of a particular size. Mr. Craig replied that any proposed courtyard on the rear elevation should be designed so that no future addition could be constructed within that courtyard. Mr. Chadwick confirmed with Mr. Craig that his tradeoff would be the loss of the gymnasium elevation for the preservation of the central school block elevation. He added that any addition will require certain tradeoffs. Mr. Craig stated that the parking lot on the park property is his preferred location, but he acknowledged the issue of ownership. Mr. Chadwick responded that a future phase two development may impact different elements of the building, but asked Mr. Elefante to address the proposal in more detail.

Ms. Ballo asked APS to clarify its position regarding planning for the second phase of the addition. Mr. Prisco said the School Board directed staff to plan for a future addition to expand the school an additional 300 seats. Nothing should be planned in this first phase of the addition that would preclude a future expansion.

Mr. Dudka stated that the rear of the building is a captivating elevation. He recommended the retention of the relationship of the rear elevation to the overall site. He suggested that the project team consider breaking down the addition into smaller pieces instead of designing it as a single block. Studying historic preservation driven alternatives and then considering transportation schemes may lead to new solutions not previously considered. He stated he is primarily concerned more about the massing and location of the addition more than the detailing.

The Chairman voiced concerns that the proposed schemes demolished or inhibited views of character-defining features of the historic building from the athletic fields and Old Dominion Drive.

Mr. Woodruff asked how many square feet could be acquired by the scheme where the addition is stepped into the existing topography. Ms. Margolies replied that one story of the building could be buried below the courtyard, but there are programmatic and design issues (use of the interior, lighting, etc.) that would have to be overcome. She discussed potential concerns with the scheme including siting a new road parallel to the athletic field.

Mr. Dudka stated that the proposed road itself is not in keeping with the historic context of the site. Mr. Chadwick noted that the road will be utilized mainly for buses. Mr. Dudka shared concerns that adding a road will alter the historically significant relationship between the school and the athletic field. Mr. Chadwick suggested that the road could be treated in such a way as to blend with the existing landscape.

Mr. Deering requested that the project team provide additional scenarios and massing diagrams that specifically address how each proposal addresses the historic architecture and the significant historic events that occurred at Stratford School. He suggested the creation of a matrix that illustrated how each proposal addresses the preservation-related bullets outlined in the Guiding Principles. As APS agreed to these principles, he suggested that a compliance grid should be presented to the HALRB that shows how each scheme meets or fails to adhere to these concepts.

Mr. Elefante stated that the purpose of tonight's meeting was to recognize that the project team has just started the design process in relation to historic preservation and was hoping for comments on the various scenarios presented. Ms. Ballo confirmed that this was the direction HPP staff gave to Quinn Evans, and that unlike other committee meetings, historic preservation is the focus of this meeting. Mr. Dudka commented that these major ideas (massing, site location, etc.) have a natural evolution; it will be difficult to return to PFRC and BLPC later to ask them to move backwards because we have now considered historic preservation. Mr. Dudka reiterated that historic preservation needs to be addressed as early as possible and he felt that the HALRB is already involved very late in the process.

Mr. Chadwick stated there is a sense of urgency due to increasing student enrollment. Mr. Prisco suggested an additional work session/meeting could be held before the next scheduled July 15, 2015, work session with the HALRB. The HPP staff and the chairman discussed the potential of having the APS team return to the June 3, 2015, DRC meeting to continue the discussion.

The HPP staff, Chairman, and APS staff discussed the upcoming historic district designation public hearing on June 17, 2015. The Chairman confirmed that proposed historic district design guidelines will outline what items will require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HALRB. Mr. Chadwick stated that he will need to ensure that the design guidelines will not limit the design solutions for an effective middle school. Ms. Liccese-Torres stated that the purpose of the design guidelines is to help inform the process moving forward. Mr. Chadwick reiterated that he needs to ensure that the design guidelines will not impair the ability for the School Board to build an addition to the middle school and have necessary instructional programs. Ms. Liccese-Torres said the draft design guidelines will be shared with APS the first week in June.

Mr. Matta provided additional feedback, but aligned himself with his colleagues' previous comments. He stated that siting solutions should consider the flattest area of the site. Immediately rear of the building (at the current location of the portable classrooms), a one to two-story addition with a green roof and a creative way to deliver daylight could accommodate the interior program and create the needed circulation network. He also suggested the project architects study a potential combination of vertical additions to the existing building and a buried addition in the courtyard. He believed this may result in minimal overall impact to character-defining elements of the existing building.

Mr. Craig stated that the park property is a natural location for an addition. Mr. Chadwick responded that the lack of schemes proposing construction on the County's park property is multifaceted. Recent failures to construct on park property at Thomas Jefferson, scheduling issues with acquiring property outside of APS control, and other budgetary issues will delay the completion of the school. These realities remove the possibility of building on this section of the property for phase one.

Ms. Solo discussed the stair tower impacted by the 1995 addition and its overall loss of architectural integrity. Mr. Chadwick agreed that this location has been severely compromised and suggested that this may be an appropriate location for a new entrance that is complementary to the rest of the historic building. Mr. Dudka stated that the elevation of the gymnasium, however, retains architectural significance and aspects of this elevation should be considered and weighed in any scenarios. Mr. Elefante stated that aspects of the elevation may be able to be retained/remain visible on the interior in a number of schemes.

Ms. Liccese-Torres discussed that the proposed design guidelines will address the existing building, future construction, and renovations and explain what would be reviewed by the HPP staff and/or the HALRB. She asked APS to elaborate on any renovations plans currently under consideration. Mr. Prisco stated that there is a renovation project scheduled this summer for earthquake repairs that will address masonry issues with the existing building. Quinn Evans will be reviewing the project to ensure proper stewardship of the building. He offered to provide the scope of the work to HPP staff and welcomed comments/recommendations from the HALRB. The HPP staff agreed to review the scope and give comments.

The Chairman thanked the applicants for attending the meeting. She encouraged all of the HALRB members to consider attending the upcoming DRC meeting to continue to provide feedback on the Stratford project.

REPORTS OF CHAIRMAN, STAFF AND STANDING COMMITTEES

- A) Chairman's Report: The Chairman notified the HALRB that Mr. Uldricks will be resigning from the HALRB due to upcoming time constraints. She thanked him for his service and presented him with a certificate of appreciation.

The Chairman discussed the success of the Little Saigon community event on May 9, 2015, and reminded the board of the upcoming dedication of the Arlington Lodge #58 Historic Marker on June 6.

- B) Survey: Mr. Liebertz discussed the timing for two upcoming historic district designations: the Cambridge Courts Historic District and Hermitage Historic District. Staff decided to delay the HALRB public hearings for these items until Fall 2015 due to scheduling conflicts.
- C) Site Plan Review: None.
- D) Staff reports: Ms. Liccese-Torres thanked the members of the board who attended the successful Little Saigon Event on May 9. She confirmed that the stickers for the self-guided audio/video tour will be located on the participating buildings for an extended period of time.

Ms. Liccese-Torres discussed the recent success of the second Historic House Research Workshop sponsored on May 13 by the Arlington Historical Society. She thanked Mr. Laporte for his attendance.

Ms. Liccese-Torres noted that the HPP applied for a certified local government grant to update the African American history brochure written in 2002. The HPP plans to coordinate with the Arlington Convention and Visitors Bureau to update this document later this year.

Ms. Liccese-Torres updated the board on the Arlington History Task Force. She reminded the board of the purpose and goals of the group.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.