

***Red Cross/Trenton Street Site Plan #446***

Action – April 12, 2018

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**Location**

The 172,194 sq. ft. (3,953 acres) site is located at 4333 Arlington Blvd. between North Trenton Street and North Thomas Street in the Buckingham Neighborhood Conservation Plan area. The subject site is currently occupied by the existing Whitefield Commons apartments, comprised of four buildings with 63 total dwelling units, two single-family homes, and the Red Cross Arlington County Chapter office. The site is bounded by Arlington Oaks condominium property to the north, North Thomas Street and Saint Thomas More Cathedral and School to the east, Arlington Boulevard and the National Foreign Affairs Training Center to the south, and North Trenton Street and Arlington Oaks condominium property to the west.

**Details**

The Applicant, Wesley Housing Development Corporation (WHDC), proposes to rezone portions of the property from R-6 to RA8-18, and from RA8-18 to R15-30T, and to construct a new multi-family residential building with 115 units and two rows of townhouses with 19 total units. The site area includes the existing 63-unit Whitefield Commons buildings, which will remain. Two additional units will be constructed in space now used for storage and the current management office. Additional project details include:

- 115 new multi-family units in a 5-story building
  - 100% committed affordable units (if funding is obtained)
  - Earthcraft v.4 Gold certification
  - Six Accessible ANSI Type A Units: 1 Studio, 3 One-BRs and 2 Two-BRs;
- 19 new market-rate townhouse units (3-stories);
- 63 existing affordable units in Whitefield Commons plus two additional units;
- 70% of the rental units “family-sized” with two or three bedrooms;
- Project density 54 units per acre within the RA-18 District and 25 units per acre in the R15-30T District;
- Reduced parking space ratio of 0.88 spaces per unit for the proposed multi-family building and 0.66 spaces per unit for the existing Whitefield Commons apartments (ACZO Sections 7.3.4.E and 14.3.7.A) resulting in 102 structured parking spaces in the multifamily residential building and a net increase of five on-site surface parking spaces for Whitefield Commons residents and townhouse visitor parking.

**Affordable Housing Program (Site Plan Condition #44 Language in Attachment 1)**

The County recommends that the Applicant meet the affordable housing requirements of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) by providing one hundred percent (100%) committed affordable units on-site in the new multi-family building, or 115 units, which includes 29 units of additional density for an affordable housing bonus, as outlined below:

1. ZO §15.5.8 – Affordable Housing Ordinance. Except in this case where the new multi-family building is providing 100% committed affordable units, the Applicant would have the choice of providing or making:

- a cash contribution in the amount of \$306,104;
- on-site units: 736 sq. ft. or approximately one (1) unit;
- off-site nearby units: 1,103 sq. ft. or approximately one (1) unit; or
- off-site units: 1,471 sq. ft. or approximately two (2) units.

2. ZO §15.5.9 – Affordable Housing Bonus. The County proposes that one hundred percent (100%) of the 115 units in the new multifamily building will be committed affordable units. However, the Zoning Ordinance does not specify how to calculate the required contribution for affordable units in exchange for the additional density (25%) permitted by this provision of the Zoning Ordinance. Previous site plan projects have required affordable contributions of between 20% and 50% of the bonus units. The Applicant has proposed to provide nine (9) units, or 31%, of the proposed 29 bonus units as CAFs committed for 30 years with rents affordable to households earning up to 60% of the area median income (AMI).

It is anticipated that the Applicant will submit an application for Affordable Housing Investment Funds (AHIF) in order to help finance the development at a later date. If gap financing is available through AHIF, the Applicant plans to develop the new building as 100% affordable. In addition to AHIF, projected major sources of funding include an amortized first mortgage and tax credit equity through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program.

The development contributes to the guiding vision and goals of the Arlington County Affordable Housing Master Plan. With the average household income at Whitefield Commons at 35% of AMI, the affordability mix of the proposed building will both add to the committed affordable housing stock and contribute to income diversification in the Buckingham neighborhood.

### **Green Building Density Incentive Program**

Arlington County’s Green Building Density Incentive Policy for Site Plans contains bonus density provisions for site plan projects that meet the objectives of the County’s green building program. The Applicant commits to a certification of Earthcraft v.4 Gold in exchange for 32 units of bonus density, consistent with Section 15.5.7 of the Zoning Ordinance.

### **Historic Preservation**

The project area contains a group of garden apartment buildings now known as Whitefield Commons (historically, the Windsor Apartments), that are identified collectively as an “Important Resource” in the County’s Historic Resources Inventory (HRI). Whitefield Commons was constructed in 1942, and is listed as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Condition #59 requires recordation of an historic preservation easement for the area comprised of the Whitefield Commons buildings.

**Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission considered this project at their meeting of April 9, 2018 and after much discussion voted to recommend that the County Board approve the project with the staff-supported site plan conditions. The vote was 4 – 3. A link to the Planning Commission draft staff report can be found [here](#).

**Recommendation**

County staff supports the affordable housing program described in Condition #44.

**Map of Red Cross/Trenton Street Site Plan**



ATTACHMENT 1 – SITE PLAN CONDITION LANGUAGE

44. **Affordable Housing Contribution Commitment (~~Demolition Permit Shell and Core Certificate of Occupancy~~)**

- A. Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit, the Developer agrees to submit in writing to and obtain from the County Manager, for his review and approval its plan to fulfill the requirements of this condition for 100 % Committed Affordable Units (“CAFs”) in the new multi-family building. Subject to review and approval by the County Attorney, the Developer agrees to execute all necessary documents including a Committed Affordable Unit Agreement (“CAF Agreement”) prior to the issuance of a demolition permit.
- B. For the new 100 % CAF multi-family building, the Developer agrees to execute all documents (including a CAF Agreement) necessary to evidence its agreement to all of the terms and conditions for additional density through on-site CAFs (in addition to the requirements of ACZO §15.5.8.A-G), including, but not limited to, the conditions as set forth below, subject to the review and approval by the County Attorney, prior to the issuance of a Demolition Permit for the project:
- 1) **Affordable Rents:** The Developer agrees that the new multi-family building shall be 100% committed affordable. For one-bedroom units, each of the CAFs shall meet the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code minimum standard of at least 100 SF per bedroom for occupancy of two (2) persons; and have a minimum of 200 SF of combined living/dining space for each CAF. For two-bedroom units, each of the CAFs shall meet the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code minimum standard for occupancy for at least four (4) persons, with a minimum of 200 SF of combined living/dining space for each CAF and with a minimum of 100 SF for each bedroom. For three-bedroom units, each of the CAFs shall meet the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code minimum standard for occupancy for at least six (6) persons, with a minimum of 250 SF of combined living/dining space for each CAF and with a minimum of 100 SF for each bedroom. The CAFs shall have rents affordable to households at or below 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) as published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Washington, DC Metropolitan Statistical Area, adjusted for household size. The Developer agrees that the affordable rents of the CAFs shall not exceed 30% of the 60% AMI level as published by HUD, minus a utility allowance (if applicable) as per the schedule of Allowances for Tenant-Furnished Utilities provided by the Housing Division. These CAFs shall be leased only to households whose incomes do not exceed 60% of AMI as published by HUD for the Washington, DC Metropolitan Statistical Area, adjusted for household size.
  - 2) **Rent Increases:** The Developer agrees that rent increases for CAFs will be limited to increases provided by the Housing Division using AMI-based income limits

published by HUD. For the first five (5) years of occupancy by each household in a CAF, the Developer agrees to a cap on the increase in rent of 5% per year in years where the AMI-based income limits published by HUD exceed 5%.

- 3) **Compliance Period:** The Developer agrees that the Site Plan condition shall require the CAFs to remain affordable as defined in Paragraph 1 “Affordable Rents” and Paragraph 2 “Rent Increases” above for a term of 30 years from the date of issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy for the last CAF unit that is able to be occupied for the building in which the CAF units are located. The Developer agrees to execute a Declaration of Restrictive Covenants and Deed for the CAF units, subject to review and approval by the County Attorney, stating that the affordability condition ~~for~~ shall run with the land for 30 years.
  
- 4) **Accessible Units:** The Developer agrees to maintain a minimum of three (3) of the CAFs as Type A units (“accessible units”) under standards described in the American National Standards Institute “Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities” (ICC/ANSI A117.1) as adopted by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. The Developer agrees to diligently market the accessible units to income-qualified households with persons with physical disabilities for a period of 60 days during the initial marketing and leasing period. If after 60 days the Developer is unable to rent the accessible units to income-qualified households with persons with disabilities, the Developer agrees to continue to make best efforts to market and lease the accessible units to income-qualified households with persons with disabilities, but the Developer may market and lease these accessible units to any income-qualified households regardless of disability. The Developer agrees to market accessible these units as part of the Developer's Affirmative Marketing Plan, described below.
  
- 5) **Developer Affirmative Marketing Plan:** The Developer agrees to prepare and implement an Affirmative Marketing Plan in substantially the form as required by the Housing Division. The Developer agrees that the Affirmative Marketing Plan shall call for the initial advertising and marketing of all the CAFs for a period of at least sixty (60) days prior to the projected occupancy of the complex.

In addition, employees of the Owner, Developer and/or Property Management Company shall not submit applications for the CAFs until the CAFs have been openly marketed for a minimum of four (4) weeks.

- 6) **Condominium Conversion:** If at any time prior to the end of the 30-year compliance period for the CAFs the Owner or Developer proposes to convert the property from rental units to a condominium, the CAFs shall continue to be operated as rental units subject to the terms and conditions of this site plan condition for the remainder of the compliance period.