

**Architectural Advisory Board
July 11, 2018**

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:43 p.m.

1. Roll Call: Mrs. Duggan, Mrs. Friedlander, Mr. Way, Mr. Wong were present. Mr. Anderson was absent.
2. Petitions: There were no petitions
3. Consent Calendar: There were no consent calendar items
4. Other Business: There was no other business
5. Old Business: There was no old business
6. New Business:
 - a. AAB #20131165 Site Plan by Mill Creek Residential & Spectrum Development for Founders Row, for a mixed-use project by Mill Creek Residential and Spectrum Development LLC for properties known as 916, 920, 922, 924, 926, 928, 930, 932 & 934 West Broad Street and 919, 921 & 925 Park Avenue (Real Property Code #s 51-202-009 through 51-202-015, 51-202-003, 51-202-004, 51-202005, 51-202- 028 and 51-202-028 Outlot) zoned B-1 Limited Business

With no comments from city staff, the applicant provided an overview of the current status of the overall project and changes that had been incorporated since the last presentation.

The Board posed questions about distinct aspects of the project and discussed merits and concerns with the current iteration. Based on the presentation and discussion, the Board has the following recommendations:

I. GENERAL:

This Board appreciates the opportunity to review the development of the design of a project of this scale and location as a Gateway to the City. It is of the utmost importance that this project is compatible with the City's Visioning Plan in order to create a Unique Place with articulated massing and high quality of construction. Due to the size and stature of this project, Founders Row will set precedent by default for future developments (much the same way that the Harris Teeter project is referenced), therefore the bar needs to be high in terms of quality of construction/materials and the planning that goes into it. It is important to note that if the project is well executed on these fronts, it will draw people into experience it and enjoy all it has to offer.

II. SITE PLAN REVIEW & DISCUSSION TOPICS:

The applicant showed a slide that was not included in the package submitted to AAB members which was an aerial photo of the surrounding properties with a plan of the project superimposed on the aerial photo.

This is the type of site plan is required for a project of this size and has been requested by the AAB on multiple occasions 1/4/17 (item 010417 6a.10) and again on 6/6/18. This aerial site plan needs to be included in all future package submissions to allow for proper prior review.

1. Shadow Study:

The shadow study included in the presentation does not indicate true north, but appears to be per 'plan north'. This shadow study needs to be revised to indicate the shadow impact at surrounding properties (from true North) as well in addition to taking into account the topography of the immediate site and surrounding areas (as there is a 10' change in elevation across the Broad Street elevation) (see previous meeting minutes 010417 item 6a.11).

AAB Recommendation: Use the aerial photo/site plan as the base for the shadow studies. In addition the shadow study should, at a minimum, study the shadows of the morning, noon/early afternoon & 4pm for both the Winter & Summer Solstices to study the impact of this development on the surrounding public ways and adjacent properties. Confirm that shadows projected are based on 'True North' not 'Plan North'

2. Roofscape:

AAB noted that the expansive roofscape will introduce a 'heat island' effect in the summer and presents an opportunity for a green roof or another BMP for green building to mitigate the heat island present with expansive amounts of roofing.

AAB recommendation: Applicant to define plans to mitigate introducing a 'heat island' to this area of the City.

3. Sidewalks:

The applicant stated a 20' depth sidewalk at restaurant frontage where outdoor seating is going to be allowed.

AAB Recommendation: Define the depth of seating area along sidewalk to be limited by the Landlord so-as not to inhibit pedestrian circulation, even with the impromptu gathering that may occur at the outdoor seating areas.

4. Crosswalks:

Concern at crosswalk to Grove Street across West was expressed and although City Staff confirmed there were no comments from the City, members of City Council stated that crosswalk location was going to be removed from the project.

Several Board members expressed concern at total removal of a safe crossing at this location, due to the lack of motorist sightlines of that portion of road and witness a number of children daily trying to cross at this location to get from West End Park to the businesses that are currently at that intersection.

The current site plan also shows a pedestrian promenade near the Grove/West intersection, which implies a strong pedestrian link at this intersection, therefore the pedestrian crossing activity will likely increase at this intersection.

AAB recommendation: Keep a crosswalk at the intersection of Grove & West, but relocate it to connect to the west sidewalk of Grove and closer to the bank driveway, so there is a more natural visual connection to the pedestrian promenade and a safer, more visible location for pedestrians to cross West Street.

5. Trees:

The AAB expressed concern of the type and location of trees over the 10" Sanitary Line at Park Avenue and stated if it is determined in the design process that these trees cannot be planted or will survive directly over the Sanitary Line, that the elevations & perspectives at the 'townhouses' along Park Avenue be re-evaluated by the Board without the trees obscuring the elevations & perspectives.

Due to the U/G Utilities along the SE property line, the amount of trees has been reduced dramatically, leaving large expanses of exposed blank walls.

AAB recommendation: Study the use of a living 'green screen' at the SE elevation to aid in breaking down the expansive flat elevation of concrete masonry. Consider incorporating area at garage screen into this area. See also AAB #20131165 Item 01/04/17 6a.13.

6. Site Lighting:

Mill Creek stated that the site lighting around perimeter of development will be by The City of Falls Church. There will be no building accent lighting around the perimeter of the development.

Mill Creek also stated that 'Market Square' will be lit from the surrounding buildings. The fountain also has accent/feature lighting. See also AAB #20131165, Item 01/04/17 6a.15.

7. Market Plaza Plan:

The improvements to the documentation of the Market Plaza are noted and if quality materials and construction are used in this space, it appears from this set of documents that it will be an active and unique space.

III. ELEVATIONS & PERSPECTIVES REVIEW & DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1. Massing & Elevations:

It should be noted that the massing of most of the project requires further development, as the perspectives still show shoe-box massing at all locations except the 'triangular building' that faces Grove. The break-down of massing at the triangular building at Grove and the entry into Founders Row from West are much more successful than the other remaining elevations at the Townhouses, Residences and age-restricted buildings.

It is noted that this is a gateway project with each side having prominence to the direction it faces, therefore each elevation must be developed as a 'front' or 'iconic' elevation.

AAB Recommendation: Further develop massing of elevations at the Residences, age-restricted building, and Townhouses to break up the flatness of these elevations. In addition, all elevations require further articulation of the cornice line to aid in breaking up massing and mitigate overall flatness the elevations of the project.

2. SE Corner/Elevation:

While it is understood that code restricts square footage of windows along the property line, this elevation is prominent from the eastern approach to the project and requires further development to announce itself at the corner and at the cornice line.

AAB Recommendation: Additional and substantial revision to the SE corner to give prominent/'iconic' stature [without additional branding]. This corner will be a very visible component of the architecture for the foreseeable future and in its current state is not an acceptable design. This project is a major development and therefore a critical identity piece for the City of Falls Church. As currently proposed, this corner in no way addresses or identifies any relation to the City. The Board recommends that the applicant redesign this particular portion of the project.

3. East Elevation:

It is noted on the documents that vinyl siding is currently scheduled for the east facing residential tower courtyard. This courtyard is highly visible along the approach from downtown FCC along Broad Street.

AAB Recommendation: Reconsider use of vinyl siding at this location with an alternate material that better complements the materials of this project.

4. NE Elevation at Townhomes:

Although the townhomes were described as individual, they read in both elevation and perspective as a single box unit with multiple faces in alignment. These units need to appear

more individual from each other and could be achieved through massing studies and further breaking down of the single volume. As currently proposed, the cornice line is a simple straight line that gives the building a substantial, box-like visual perception.

AAB Recommendation: Include vertical dimensionality or depth into the cornice line to break the strong straight/flat line and break up the massing/flatness of the façade so that all units do not appear as one large one with different colors on it. The introduction of height differences or different molding of the cornice along these two sections of the building would help to reduce the massing in these areas. (While the Board would prefer increased depth articulation as well, the Board understands the limitations based on internal structures and design and requests that the applicant review options to improve the massing from a flat box-like structure to become more articulated.) See also AAB #20131165, Item 01/04/17 6a.14.

5. Elevations at 55+ Building:

These elevations in previous submissions appeared to have more breakdown of the massing and the SW Corner that addresses Broad/West intersection. In this submission, the cornice line has been flattened to a single plane and simple straight line, giving the appearance of a box with some balconies.

AAB Recommendation: Include vertical dimensionality into the cornice line of the buildings. The introduction of height differences or different molding of the cornice along these two sections of the building would help to reduce the massing in these areas. (While the Board would prefer increased depth articulation as well, the Board understands the limitations based on internal structures and design and requests that the applicant review options to improve the massing from a flat box-like structure to become more articulated.)

6. Elevation at Residence Building along Broad Street:

The elevations and perspectives of the residence building along Broad Street appears flat and is accentuated by the strong single line of the cornice and forces the perspective of a large box-like mass.

AAB Recommendation: Include vertical dimensionality or depth into the cornice line to break the strong straight/flat line and break up the massing/flatness of the façade so that all units do not appear as one large one with different colors on it. The introduction of height differences or different molding of the cornice along these two sections of the building would help to reduce the massing in these areas. (While the Board would prefer increased depth articulation as well, the Board understands the limitations based on internal structures and design and requests that the applicant review options to improve the massing from a flat box-like structure to become more articulated.) See also AAB #20131165, Items 01/04/17 6a.6 and 6a.14.

7. Elevations inside Market Plaza:

The elevations at the 'bridge' have been further developed and the breaking apart of the façade massing is successful here. The cornice line along the interior East façade is a simple flat surface/plane.

AAB Recommendations:

- a. Provide stepping or projections at long runs of cornice to break up the long shallow caps of the buildings (east façade at the plaza). See also AAB #20131165, Item 01/04/17 6a.6.
- b. Provide perspective drawings of the view to the southwest from inside the main marketplace area. There is currently no clear visualization of this section of the age-restricted housing component of the project and this will be a very visible aspect of the development.

8. Elevations/Perspectives at 'triangular' building facing Grove:

The elevations at this corner that addresses Grove Street provide a more successful strategy to 'break apart' the massing at this location.

9. Storefront & Signage:

The applicant stated that the storefront and signage package is currently under design and will be submitted for review. The elevations A-A & F-F currently show these storefronts as more varied than in previous submissions.

AAB Recommendation: Provide detailed drawings of the storefront and sign placement design standards. [A note that echoes previously published comments from 10/7/15 AAB Board review stating that a comprehensive design must be a unifying feature among the storefront retails of the project (or in rhythm of how buildings are broken down within the project) and a concept for defining the area for tenant branding should be identified; this should not be a 'free-for-all' individualistic approach.] AAB #20131165, Item 01/04/17 6a.8.

The intent of this item was for the landlord/developer to set guidelines for the tenants to maintain some unify of proportions in the façade.

10. Misc. Features discussed:

- A. **Screened area at garage/loading dock:** The applicant confirmed that the dimension from the head of this opening to the underside of slab above the loading dock was in excess of 10' to mitigate views of the utilities that are suspended from the slab above.
- B. **Vents:** The applicant confirmed that the vents to be used for the residential units and other locations where vents in the face of the elevation may be required are to be flush with the face of the elevation and integrated into the architectural elements of the façade.
- C. **Juliet Balconies:** The Juliet balconies shown on the elevations within the market plaza appear to be too fragile in the elevations and look like paper clips or baby gates. The applicant stated they will submit the proposed product.

CLOSING NOTES:

The Board has become increasingly frustrated with the lack of incorporation or addressing of the Board's prior comments. This project has been presented numerous times over the past two years and numerous recommendations and requests by this Board have gone largely unmet. To make the most of everyone's time, the applicant should assure they have addressed feedback in some fashion. (This does not mean every recommendation should be incorporated, but at least that reasons are given for why certain changes have not been included.) Many of this Board's requests are simply for additional plans and visuals to best understand the architecture, context, and impact of the project and do not require or request design changes and should be relatively easy to provide.

Note: The applicant made comment that they were unaware of AAB comments to date, however, this applicant has submitted plans for review under multiple names: Founders Row (aka Masons Row) and come before the AAB on several occasions (including but not limited to):

- August 2014
- February 2015
- May 2015
- October 2015
- January 4, 2017
- June 6, 2018

All of these meetings have been memorialized with minutes and review comments. Meeting minutes from these meetings should be cross referenced in the City archives and available for anyone to download.

MOTION:

Mr. Wong made a motion to recommend city council accept the special exemption to change the segment of the project originally planned for a hotel to age-restricted housing. Mrs. Friedlander seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

7. Minutes:

- a. Minutes from the June 6, 2018 AAB meeting: Mr. Wong made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Ms. Duggan seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.