

City of Alexandria

Urban Design Advisory Committee

November 2017 Meeting Notes
Thursday, November 16 at 9:00am
City Hall, Room 1101

[FINAL]

Committee Members in Attendance:

Stephen Kulinski, Chair (SK)
Marie McKenney Tavernini, Vice Chair (MT)
Roger Waud (RW)
Engin Artemel (EA)

Committee Members with an Excused Absence:

Abbey Oklak, Secretary (AO)

City Staff in Attendance:

Michael Swidrak (MS) P&Z
Heba ElGawish (HE) P&Z

Applicant Team in Attendance:

Ken Wire (KW)	McGuire Woods
Allison Paul (AP)	Lessard Design
Trini Rodriguez (TR)	Parker Rodriguez
Whitney Smith (WS)	Carr City Centers
Austin Flajser (AF)	Carr City Centers
Matthew Buhts (MB)	Carr City Centers

Community Members in Attendance:

Dan Straub (DS) Old Town North resident, former UDAC member

INTRODUCTION

- The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:03am as the November meeting of UDAC.
- SK introduced the members of UDAC to those in attendance. AO was unable to attend the meeting though submitted comments in advance of the meeting (see below).

OLD BUSINESS

- The Committee considered a draft of the notes for the October meeting that staff distributed to the Committee.
- MT offered the following change on page 5:
 - *MT asked that the developer of the 801 N. Fairfax Street residential to office conversion come to UDAC for a brief presentation on the proposed architectural reskinning of the building. EA seconded this request.*
- MT moved to adopt the meeting notes with the above change included, and EA seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved 4-0.

Deleted: AO

NEW BUSINESS

Committee Elections

- MS introduced the election process to the Committee.
- MT moved to nominate SK to remain as Chair of the Committee. EA seconded. Motion carried 3-0 (SK abstained).
- SK moved to nominate MT to remain as Vice Chair of the Committee. EA seconded. Motion carried 3-0 (MT abstained).
- MT moved to nominate AO to remain as Secretary of the Committee. EA seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Second Presentation of development proposal at Crowne Plaza Site (901 N. Fairfax Street)

Note: A Fact Sheet on the project is located at <https://www.alexandriava.gov/69556>

- KW reintroduced the project to the Committee, and noted the work that had done by the project team to refine elements of the plan since the last UDAC meeting, and since the current UDAC submission was sent to the Committee. He added that the project team has focused on the townhouse elevations, and is hoping for a general endorsement of the scheme.
- AF continued that the project team has focused on the articulation and coloration of the townhouse “modules.”
- AP gave an overview of the townhouse elevations as currently proposed, including the use of rustication on the first floor of units, panels to modernize the facades of some of the townhouses, and the use of light-colored panels on the recessed fourth floors. The townhouse corners have been anchored with dark trim and warehouse-style windows, and units with lighter details are featured in the inner portions of the townhouse rows.
- AP discussed the proposed “live-work” units fronting N. Fairfax Street which have a storefront window system in order to allow future flexibility for the use of the first floor

of the units as potential arts-related units. EA noted he liked the retail-storefront appearance of these units.

- AP showed different options for townhouse facades, including darker and red brick units as one option, and the use of lighter grey brick on another option.
- EA noted he supported more contemporary and lighter colors of brick, but would be amenable to variations in red brick color among townhouses.
- SK added that the color of the townhouses should blend with the multifamily tower, have lighter tones, and not feature red brick.
- AF noted that the project team has been working to set a visual reference point between the tower and the townhouses. KW added that the detailing of the first two stories of the multifamily tower have been designed to relate to the townhouses. RW added that the darker base on the tower better connects with the townhouses. AP noted the window mullions and balconies have been added to the lower levels of the tower to help relate to the building and its surrounding green space, and create the feeling of individual units and not a commercial building within.
- In discussing the multifamily tower, AP described the changes to the design, including the addition of composite wood panels on the side of protruding portions of the N. Fairfax Street facades.
- The Committee and the applicant briefly discussed balconies on the tower. The balconies will not be glass due to structural concerns, though will be not be solid in order to emphasize the lighter feel of the tower.
- RW asked the project team if it had studied using a darker trim around the art center “jewel box” in order to visually contrast it from the multifamily tower.
- MT asked the project how they are addressing the scale and proximity of the tower to the townhouse buildings, especially in regard to the linear amenity spaces.
- TR then gave an overview of the updated landscape design. She discussed the proposal to enliven the linear spaces with plantings and patio areas, and the front plaza area around the art center that will be lined with pavers. TR walked through the linear walkways on both sides of the multifamily tower which lead to an overlook and small plaza facing the trail. Based on future negotiations with the rail company that owns portions of the Mt. Vernon Trail right-of-way, the project team will look to provide an alternative scheme that allows the townhouses facing the trail to connect directly to the trail, and better connect the trail and the plaza.
- KW added that the proposal pushes the curb line of the three site frontages outward in order to provide wider sidewalk areas.
- EA asked about installing brick sidewalks along the frontage on Montgomery Street and Canal Center Plaza. KW and MS noted that these blocks are identified in the Urban Design Guidelines for Old Town North as concrete. EA requested that staff look into sidewalk options.

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- TR discussed the potential for a mural to be painted on a portion of the underground garage wall that faces the trail.
- MT asked about the loading area located at the rear portion of the multifamily tower. She had concerns about truck access to the loading area and wanted to confirm that a truck using the space would not block the garage any townhouse units. KW mentioned that the trucks will be able to back several feet into the building to load or unload, and that the applicant is not expecting any exceptionally large moving trucks to utilize the loading area, since the largest units in the multifamily tower will no likely be larger than two bedrooms.
- KW noted that the applicant plans to bring the proposal back to UDAC in December.

Other New Business

- MT brought up the development at 700 N. Washington Street, which was endorsed by the Committee in 2013, and is currently under construction. MT also asked about the Towne Motel redevelopment, on the 800 block of N. Washington Street. This redevelopment was reviewed by UDAC in 2015 and is not yet under construction.
- SK followed up with MS about posting the list of UDAC projects on the UDAC City webpage.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:14 am.

Comments related to the 901 N. Fairfax Submission to UDAC from Abbey Oklak:

- Open Space Calculation page A02
 - The diagram hasn't been updated for the roof top open space, so I just want to make sure the calculation on this sheet is still correct and they are meeting the 40%
- Street Sections
 - Thanks for adding them on L04
 - Would be helpful on the overall site sections A04-A05 for clarity
- Variety of Height Standard 2.3.3
 - Montgomery Street has a good variation with the two units who have the building coming to the streetwall on the 4th level, but the other elevations don't follow this design.
 - Multifamily tower with the amenity space does a good job at making the height variety.
- Street Wall Variety Guideline 2.1.2
 - Townhouses look like they have variety and window pop - outs, but can you provide a bit more detail on the facade depth.
- Elevations
 - Like the direction the townhouses are going in, but the multi-family tower still seems underdeveloped. Possibly in the different rendering techniques of the two building types, but would be good to understand the tower better.
- Units
 - Any more information on the final number of multi-family units?