

## ABSTRACT

Thunderbird Archeology, a division of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc., of Gainesville, Virginia prepared a Documentary Study for Ramsey Homes, located on North Patrick Street between Pendleton and Wythe Streets for Ramsey Homes, LP of Alexandria, Virginia. The Board of Commissioners of the Alexandria and Redevelopment Housing Authority (ARHA) propose to redevelop the study area consistent with the Braddock East Master Plan (BEMP) at a density high enough to sustain a critical mass of mixed-income residents and work force housing in order to maintain the strong social and support networks that are essential in sustainable communities. The provision of additional affordable housing is a key goal of the Alexandria City Council 2010 Strategic Plan, ARHA 2012-2022 Strategic Plan, Braddock Metro Neighborhood plan, and the BEMP. Specifically, the BEMP proposes meeting the goal of additional units in the ARHA sites proposed for redevelopment. The Documentary Study is required under the City of Alexandria Archaeological Protection Code prior to development of the property.

The Ramsey Homes property is situated outside of the original 1749 boundaries of Alexandria and remained undeveloped until the 19th century. George and Teresa Blish, immigrants from Germany, owned the block from at least 1834 until 1849 and operated a market garden on the property that supplied fruits and vegetables for the needs of residents of Alexandria. Henry Daingerfield, one of the wealthiest men in Alexandria, purchased it and erected several houses which were rented primarily to Irish immigrants who worked in various industries and businesses in and near Alexandria. During the Civil War, the Union army commandeered the lot for the headquarters, barracks, and hospital of Battery H of the Independent Pennsylvania Artillery, which served garrison duty in Alexandria from 1863 until 1865. Following the war, Henry Daingerfield's heirs continued to rent out deteriorating houses on the block until the 1890s, by which time the property was likely vacant of habitable buildings.

During the early 20th century, the property changed hands multiple times and remained vacant until World War II. In 1941, the United States Housing Authority (USHA) began to plan for the construction of permanent housing for African-American defense workers in the Uptown neighborhood. Then known as the Lanham Act Alexandria Defense Housing Project VA-44133, the vernacular Modernist Ramsey Homes (or Ramsay as it was sometimes spelled) was completed in 1942. ARHA purchased the homes in 1953 and has maintained them as affordable since then. Between 1964 and 1979, ARHA added walled patios and removed the skylights and constructed hipped roofs, altering the buildings' style to vernacular Prairie. In 1995, Colonial Revival elements were added, and original chain-linked fencing, a paved playground, and plantings were removed.

In 1984, the Parker-Gray Zoning Overlay District, where the Ramsey Homes are located, was established and codified "to protect community health and safety and to promote the education, prosperity and general welfare of the public through the identification, preservation, and enhancement of buildings, structures, settings, features and ways of life which characterize this nineteenth and early twentieth century residential neighborhood" (Zoning Ordinance Article X. Sec. 10-200). Two years later, a Board of Architectural

Review (BAR) was appointed to review applications for alterations to properties in the district. In 2008 and 2010, the “Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District”, which covered a larger area, was listed respectively to the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) and the National Register of Historic Place (NRHP). In early 2015, ARHA submitted an application to the BAR for a Permit to Demolish. In a memo dated April 22, 2015, city staff recommended demolition; however, the BAR voted to deny the request. ARHA appealed the decision, and on September 12, 2015, City Council overturned the BAR’s decision, thereby granting the Permit to Demolish.

The study area has a moderate to high probability of containing late 18th century – 20th century artifact deposits and archeological features that could potentially provide significant information about domestic development in the Parker-Gray Historic District within the City of Alexandria, Virginia. Additionally, one previously recorded archeological site has been mapped within the study area; site 44AX0160 represents a probable Civil War-era military barracks site that was subjected to limited investigations conducted by Alexandria Archaeology in 1991. According to the DHR site record, site 44AX0160 has not been evaluated for eligibility to the NRHP. As such, the study area is known to include cultural deposits associated with the historic Civil War-era military occupation of the city. An Archeological Evaluation is recommended.