



To: City Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: April 18, 2016
RE: **Final Location, Character and Extent review of a sign identifying Albert Hill Middle School, 3400 Patterson Avenue; UDC No. 2016-03**

I. APPLICANT

Shante' Knight, Richmond Public Schools

II. LOCATION

Albert Hill Middle School, 3400 Patterson Avenue

Property Owner:

City of Richmond School Board

III. PURPOSE

The application is for final location, character, and extent review of a sign identifying Albert Hill Middle School.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This project involves the installation of a freestanding, two-sided identifying sign in front of Albert Hill Middle School at 3400 Patterson Avenue. The sign is proposed to be installed near the intersection of Patterson Avenue and N. Nansemond Street, perpendicular to Patterson Avenue and set back 6' from the property line. The applicant's report notes that the sign will provide the school with an opportunity to communicate scheduled events to the students and greater community.

During conceptual review, the Urban Design Committee Chair appointed a two-member subcommittee to work with the applicant on the sign design prior to final review. The applicant refined details related to the sign with the input of the subcommittee, and informally presented the revisions to the Committee at their meeting in January 2016. The Committee expressed their pleasure with the revisions and encouraged the applicant to submit for final design.

The conceptual design included an aluminum base for the sign; however, at the UDC meeting in December 2015 a contractor offered their services to provide and construct a masonry base at no cost to the school.

The UDC found the plans to be consistent with the recommendations made during conceptual review and with the plans presented informally to the Committee at their January meeting, and inspected both of the proposed color options. The Committee was complementary of the improvements made to the design from conceptual to final approval. Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant final approval as submitted for both options.

Staff Contacts:

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

Albert Hill Middle School occupies the block bounded by Park Avenue, Roseneath Road, Patterson Avenue and N. Nansemond Street. The three story, 99,000 square feet Mediterranean Revival school was designed by Charles Robinson and sits on 3.3 acres in the R-48 (Multi-family Residential) zoning district. The adjacent blocks to the north, west and south are also zoned R-48 and are developed with multi-family and single family attached and detached dwellings in a dense development pattern. There are also a number of small commercial and office uses in the immediate vicinity. To the east of the site is an area zoned R-6 (Single-family attached Residential) developed with multi-family and single family attached and detached dwellings in a dense development pattern.

b. Scope of Review

The proposed sign is subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the City Charter as identification for a “public building”.

c. UDC Review History

The conceptual plans for this project were reviewed by the UDC and approved by the Planning Commission in December 2015, with the following conditions:

- That the applicant should proceed with sign colors that are more subtle and in keeping with the building.
- That the sign should be designed more proportionately with the building.
- That landscaping around the sign is not required.

The Urban Design Committee Chair appointed a two-member subcommittee to work with the applicant on the sign design prior to final review. The applicant refined details related to the sign with the applicant, and informally presented the revisions to the Committee at their meeting in January 2016. The Committee expressed their pleasure with the revisions and encouraged the applicant to submit for final design.

d. Project Description

This project involves the installation of a freestanding, two-sided identifying sign in front of Albert Hill Middle School at 3400 Patterson Avenue. The sign is proposed to be installed near the intersection of Patterson Avenue and N. Nansemond Street, perpendicular to Patterson Avenue and set back 6’ from the property line and will provide the school with an opportunity to communicate scheduled events to the students and greater community.

The sign will be 87” tall (a 6” cornice, a 49” sign area, a 2” spacer and a 30” base), 129” wide and 20” deep. The 8’ light cabinet sits nestled on a base and between two columns composed of a brick selected to match the school building color. The conceptual sign design was for an aluminum base; however, at the UDC meeting in December 2015 a contractor offered their services to provide and construct a masonry base at no cost to the school. The masonry base will have an inset portion that matches the bond pattern on the school. The cornice is an aluminum top. Option 1 is for a “Macademia Beige” aluminum top; Option 2 is for a “Dorian Gray” aluminum top.

The light cabinet is composed of an aluminum frame with a white lexan internal illumination section featuring three rows that accept 6" tall changeable letters. Atop that is the name of the school with the tiger logo, all on an orange background, all of which will also be internally illuminated.

The project cost is \$8,000, with funding coming from the school Parent/Teacher Association. Once all approvals are in place, fabrication and installation should be complete in approximately one month.

e. Master Plan

The subject property is located in the Near West Planning District, as defined by the citywide Master Plan. The Plan places the subject area in the Public and Open Space use category, with primary uses including government facilities.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines impart that "sign lettering should be 4" to 14" high and should be in proportion to the area in which it will be displayed. The Guidelines also note that "freestanding signs should be landscaped with appropriate evergreen shrubs, ground cover planting, annuals and/or perennials" (page 24).

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**