



IT'S EVERYONE'S VIEW – NOT JUST FOR A FEW

**High-Rise Buildings Mar Historic Views From Libby Hill Park
and Harm Historic Tobacco Row**

The illustrations in this presentation were commissioned by the River View Advocates, a group of Richmond residents concerned about the impact of incompatible development on historic Tobacco Row and the historic views from Libby Hill Park.

The images were produced by graduate planning students as an independent project to gain experience. Their work is not affiliated with, and should not be attributed to their university. We sincerely thank:

Alex Beatty, Shawn Winter, and Naomi Siodmok

Proposed Developments:

“The James at Rivers Bend:” 16-story residential high rise on Pear Street between Dock and Main Streets, seeks Special Use Permit for the height and residential use. Labeled Pear Street in this presentation.

“Richmond on the James:” Three office buildings ranging from to sitting on top an approximately 1000-foot long parking podium along Dock Street between Pear Street and Orleans Street, approved in April 2014 by the Richmond Director of Planning under “by-right” zoning. Project formerly known as Echo Harbor. Labeled Echo Harbor in this presentation.

Statement of Methodology

1. We constructed a model in Sketchup of existing conditions. This map includes elevation provided by USGS and imagery from google maps. USGS is within 3 meters, which is not very accurate at this scale, but when we cross referenced key points of elevation from water level, we found that they were all accurate to within a foot. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument, Main Street, Cary Street, and Dock Street were used to check the basemap elevations. We then built up the existing buildings to their known heights. The Lucky Strike building (and smokestack) and the lofts building on Main Street, west of Pear Street, are accurate and used as reference points later in the process. We also checked horizontal distances to ensure accuracy.
2. We took pictures on site and noted where we stood. These wintertime images served as the backdrop for our final renderings.
3. We then built the two proposed buildings to exact scale. They are true to within a foot of the architectural drawings submitted to the city and provided to us.
4. We also built an alternative vision for the two sites based on community input, precedent buildings and parks and visioning meetings. The Echo Harbor site would be a park, and the Pear Street site would be 5 floors at Main, 6 floors at Cary, and 7 floors at Dock due to the radical change in elevation. The additional floors at Cary and Dock are underground at Main.
5. Perspectives from the model were then created from the exact location the photos were taken, from the same height off the ground, and in the same direction, ensuring that the angles and field of view captured the model image in the exact same way that the photos were captured.
6. Using Photoshop, the two images were overlaid. To ensure accuracy, existing buildings in the real images were matched precisely to those in the model, ensuring scale was accurate.
7. Then, all existing buildings were cropped out of the model, leaving the proposed building models alone within the real built environment from the photos.

Alex Beatty, Shawn Winter, and Naomi Siodmok

Aerial View of Echo Harbor site along Dock Street, rendered as a park, and Pear Street site between Dock and Main Streets showing potential alternative building form.

Also visible: Tobacco Row and Libby Hill Park, the circle with the Soldiers and Sailors Monument and steps from Libby Terrace to Main Street.





View looking east down Cary Street along Tobacco Row to Pear Street site



View looking east down Cary Street to proposed high-rise. Image originally submitted by the applicant.



View from fountain at Libby Terrace in Libby Hill Park, looking southwest toward the Pear Street site and Tobacco Row. Echo Harbor site to the left.



View from fountain at Libby Terrace in Libby Hill Park, looking southwest illustrating massing and elevations of developer proposed building at the Pear Street site



View from fountain at Libby Terrace in Libby Hill Park, looking southwest illustrating massing and elevations of developer proposed buildings for the Pear Street and Echo Harbor sites



View from Libby Terrace in Libby Hill Park, looking south at the Echo Harbor site and the Lehigh Cement Towers -- owned by city and scheduled to be torn down to return to the historic view.



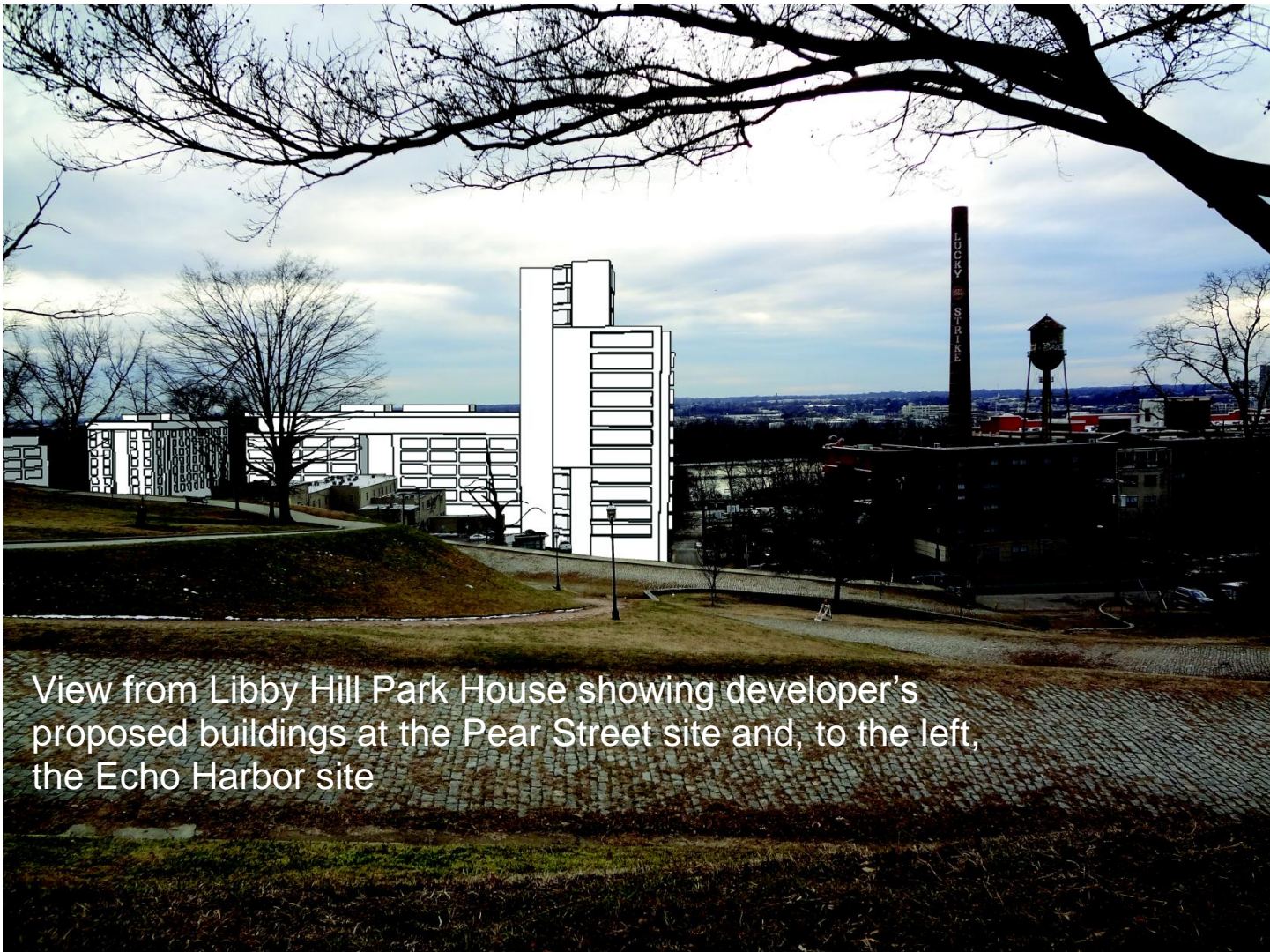
View from Libby Terrace in Libby Hill Park, looking south at the developer's proposed office buildings at the Echo Harbor site



View from Libby Terrace in Libby Hill Park, looking south at a park with a conceptual tower. The Downtown Master Plan indicates the city should purchase the land for a park



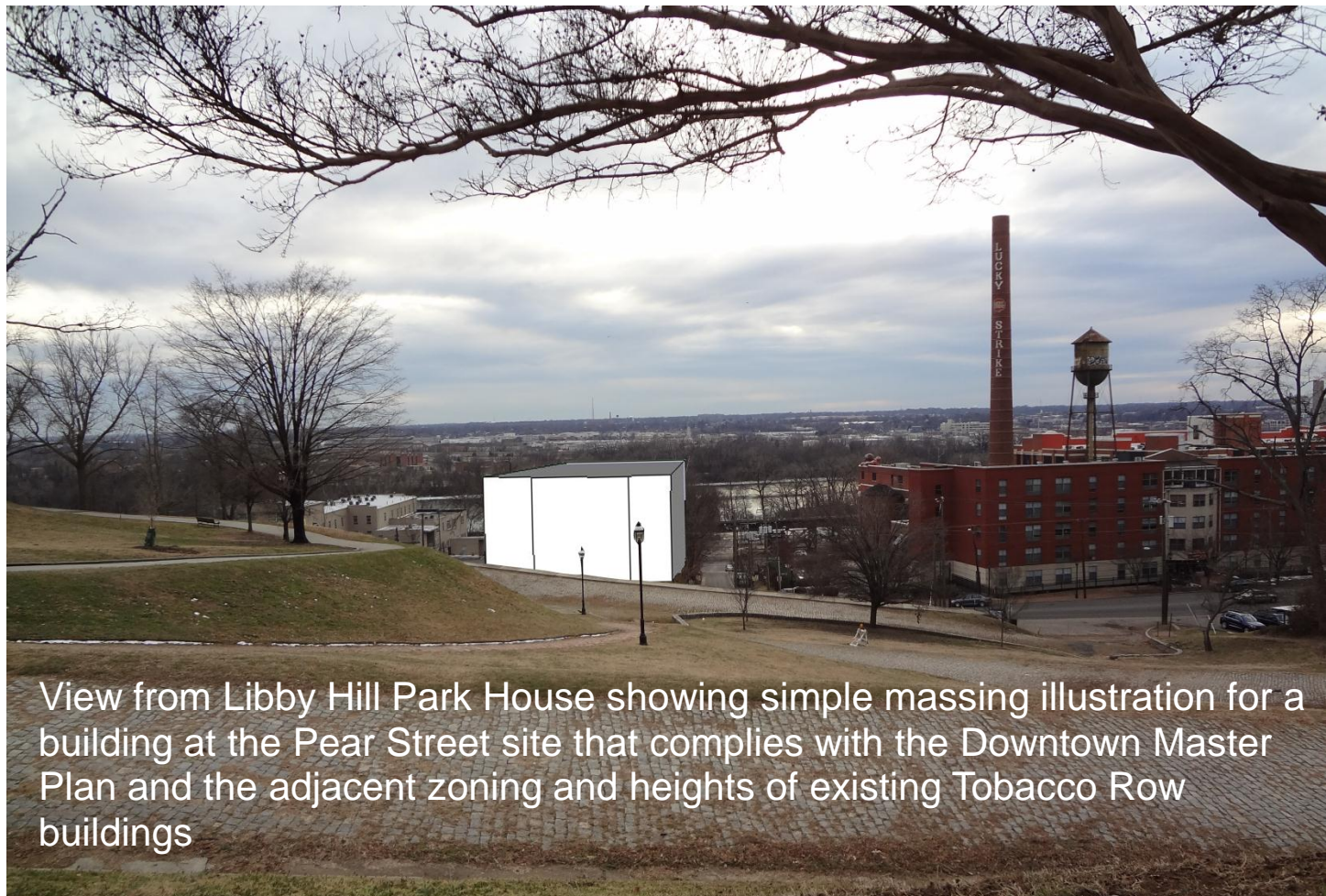
View from Libby Hill Park House to Pear Street Site



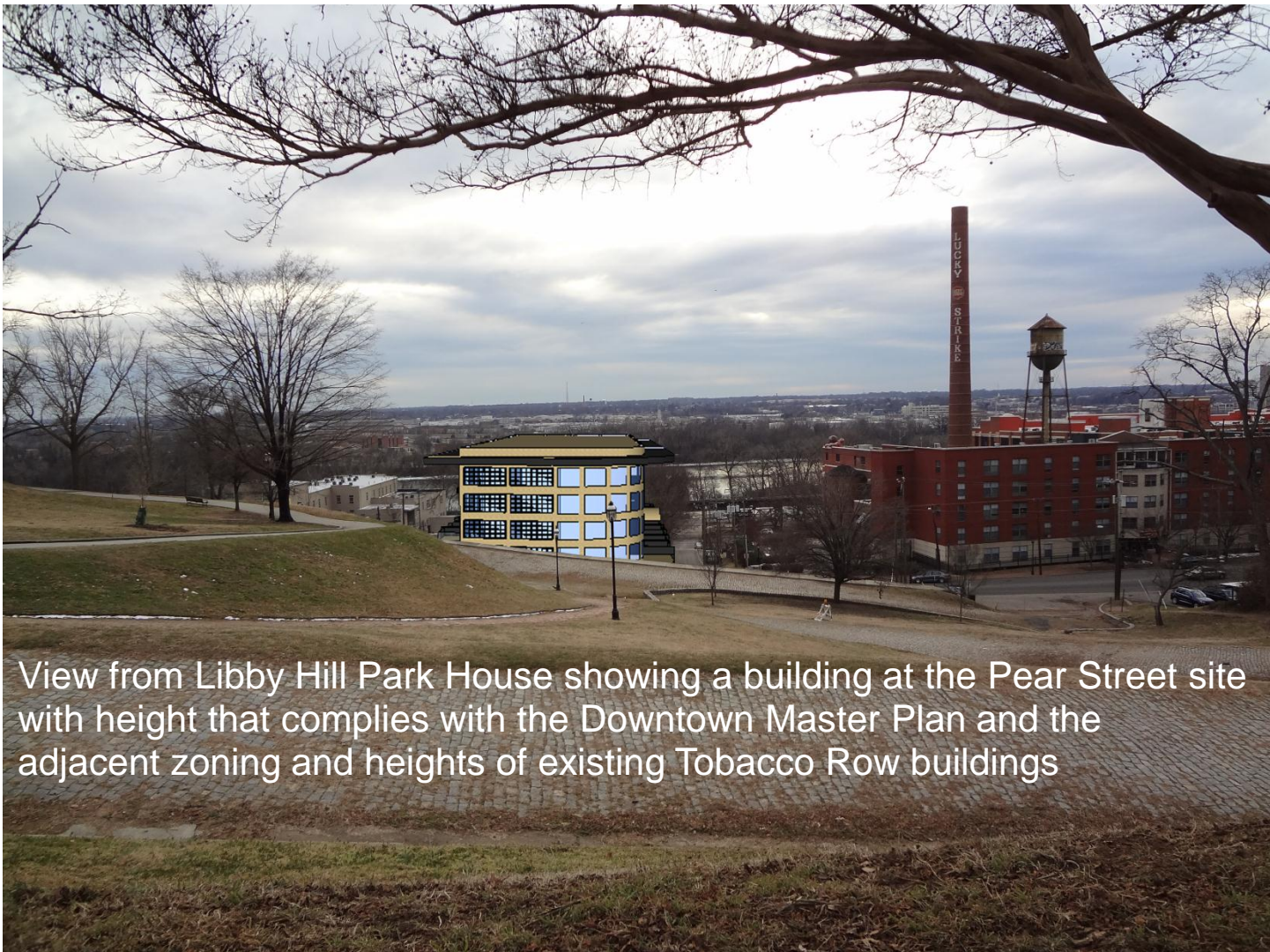
View from Libby Hill Park House showing developer's proposed buildings at the Pear Street site and, to the left, the Echo Harbor site



View from Libby Hill Park House showing developer's proposed building at the Pear Street site



View from Libby Hill Park House showing simple massing illustration for a building at the Pear Street site that complies with the Downtown Master Plan and the adjacent zoning and heights of existing Tobacco Row buildings



View from Libby Hill Park House showing a building at the Pear Street site with height that complies with the Downtown Master Plan and the adjacent zoning and heights of existing Tobacco Row buildings

Our volunteer students are not architects! But illustration shows building scale that complies with Downtown Master Plan and the adjacent zoning and heights of existing Tobacco Row buildings. Includes arch concept.



The following seven slides show architectural concepts applicable to a mid-rise building that would comply with the Downtown Master Plan and zoning.



The lighter brick color, squared bay windows, and the gun metal color of the window framing in the right-hand building, would allow it to stand-out as different from Lucky Strike and other Tobacco Row Buildings and offer a color transitioning between the red brick and the cream color of the Shiplock Watch.



Gaslight Square in DC offers a five story example, showing how black metal bay windows and red brick interact. We don't recommend mansard roofs however.



Carr Properties Edmonson Square: We include this office building because it made wonderful use of metal and glass to frame a plaza and the historic Hooff family building on the corner. Light filled glass components of a mid-rise building would add something distinctive and interesting at the end of Tobacco Row.



The Ellington on U Street in DC: This was one of the first new buildings on U Street. Two different architectural examples. Neither might be the right fit because the red brick may be too much of a faux copy of old warehouses and the cream one may have windows which are too much like mid-1900's northeastern city apartment buildings, but certain attributes like the roof ornamentation might be worth considering.



Level 2 at 14th/U in DC: Six to seven story building with a step back -- with four stories on one street face stepping up to six to seven stories. Step back could be one technique to add interest to this building and to relate it to Lucky Strike which has a couple of different levels.



The Yards by Forest City Enterprises: A major Navy Yard/SE Waterfront redevelopment that includes restoration of old Navy warehouses and new glass and steel architecture.



Torti Gallas architects project showing five story and an archway like a potential arch for the extension of Cary Street that also serves as a hyphen between what can be designed to look like two distinct buildings. However the arch should have a greater recess and might not be as tall. It could also be a squared entrance, like the passageways into courtyards found at some Tobacco Row buildings.



Taking Action

- (1) Call for rejection of the Special Use Permit for the high-rise on the Pear Street site and recommend a 5-story building at the Main Street end to conform with the Downtown Master Plan and adjacent zoning. Planning Commission meets April 21 and City Council meets April 28.
- (2) Call for the Echo Harbor site to be purchased as parkland to be added to the James River Park System (as called for in the Downtown Master Plan).

Email Richmond City Council: <http://www.richmondgov.com/CityCouncil/contacts.aspx>

Sign the Petition at Change.org: <http://chn.ge/1hgLcH7>

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