

# **City of Richmond**

900 East Broad Street 2nd Floor of City Hall Richmond, VA 23219 www.richmondgov.com

# Meeting Minutes - Final Urban Design Committee

Thursday, December 10, 20	015	10:00 AM	5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall
Call to Order			
	Ms. Almond called th	he meeting to order at 10:01 a	.m.
Roll Call			
Present: Absent:	<ul> <li>8 - Chair Andrea Almond, Chris Arias, Doug Cole, Andrew P. Gould, Giles Harnsberger, Vice Chair Andrea Levine, Jill Nolt and Robert Smith</li> <li>1 - Bryan Green</li> </ul>		
Staff Present			
Others Present	Mr. Jeff Eastman, Pl Ms. Tara Ross, PDF Mr. Mark Olinger, Pl	र	
Others Present			
	Mr. Lloyd Schieldge, Mr. Tommy Kranz, F	PU Greeley & Hansen DPW or Signs bert Hill PTA Heirloom Restorations , RPS	
Approval of Minutes			
ID 2015-023	Minutes of the Re	egular Meeting on Noven	nber 5, 2015
<u>Attachments:</u>	Minutes of the Regu	ular Meeting on November 5, 2	2015
	A motion was made by Ms. Harnsberger, seconded by Mr. Cole, that the minutes from the November 5, 2015 meeting be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:		
Aye:	6 - Arias, Cole, G	ould, Harnsberger, Levine and	1 Smith
Excused:	1 - Nolt		
Abstain:	1 - Almond		

### Secretary's Report

Mr. Eastman stated that at their November 16th meeting, the Planning Commission approved the Maymont parking lot expansion and water quality treatment train, Deepwater Terminal Road extension and Hull Street plans on the Consent Agenda with UDC recommendations. The Commission approved the GRTC BRT plans on the regular agenda with the UDC recommendations. Mr. Eastman stated that he had approved a building permit for the monopole at Fire Station #25 on Huguenot Road.

#### Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

There were no continuances or deletions.

## CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Ms. Levine, seconded by Mr. Cole, that the Consent Agenda items be recommended for approval. The motion carried unanimously, with Mr. Gould abstaining.

1. <u>UDC No.</u> Final Location, Character and Extent Review of a roundabout at the intersection of Belmont Road and West Belmont Road

Attachments: UDC Report to CPC Staff Report to UDC Location Map Application & Plans

Letters of Support

This Location, Character and Extent Item was recommended for final approval as submitted, and was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on December 21, 2015.

2.UDC No.<br/>2015-30Conceptual Location, Character and Extent Review of a screen and grit<br/>building at the Wastewater Treatment Facility, 1400 Brander Street

Attachments: UDC Report to CPC

Staff Report to UDC

Location Map

Application & Plans

This Location, Character and Extent Item was recommended for final approval as submitted, and was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on December 21, 2015.

**3.** <u>UDC No.</u> Final Location, Character and Extent Review of an addition to Fire <u>2015-31</u> Station #20, 4715 Forest Hill Avenue Attachments: UDC Report to CPC Staff Report to UDC Location Map Application & Plans

This Location, Character and Extent Item was recommended for final approval as submitted, and was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on December 21, 2015.

#### **REGULAR AGENDA**

4. <u>UDC No.</u> <u>2015-32</u> Conceptual Location, Character and Extent Review of a sign identifying Albert Hill Middle School, 3400 Patterson Avenue

Attachments: UDC Report to CPC

Staff Report to UDC

Location Map

Application & Plans

Mr. Cole stated that he is confused about staff the recommendations as to whether he is recommending approval of the location and size and not the actual sign and Mr. Eastman stated that what he is hoping for today is some concrete specific feedback from the Committee about the design of the sign.

Ms. Harnsberger inquired if the bright orange was the school color and Mr. Eastman stated that the school mascot is the tiger. Ms. Harnsberger inquired what went into the choices of the type face selection.

[Ms. Nolt arrives at 10:18]

Ms. Anne Ewald, the Treasurer of the Albert Hill Middle School PTA, stated that the tiger is the school mascot and orange and black are the school colors. Ms. Harnsberger inquired about the type face and inquired what went into the selection of the Albert Hill font and Ms. Ewald stated that they were trying to match the fonts that are on top of the school and stated that they are more than happy to look at other shades of the orange.

Mr. Cole inquired what criteria did they give the people designing this and Ms. Ewald stated that they trying to make it something easy and stated that they wanted a nice sign to showcase the building within their budget. Ms. Ewald stated that they went to the idea of the sign from Thomas Jefferson High School and they used the same concept.

Ms. Almond inquired about the approval of Thomas Jefferson sign and Mr. Eastman stated that it was within the last year and stated there was a previous sign there and it was deteriorating and they used a similar size sign in the same location.

Mr. Smith inquired if the sign is smaller than the proposed sign and Ms. Ewald stated that they are the same size.

Mr. Arias stated that there is an existing sign at Fox Elementary which is designed as a complete opposite and inquired why they went towards this one as opposed to the one Fox has. Ms. Ewald stated that there is no the message board on Fox's and that one of the main reasons that they want the sign at Albert Hill is for a message board. Ms. Ewald stated that in elementary school there is a need for it as much because parents come into the school and are more involved. Ms. Ewald stated that when the kids move

to middle school they lose some of the parental involvement and stated that the message part of the sign is really important to the school.

Mr. Gould inquired what part of the sign is lit and Mr. Jeff Lee, with Superior Signs, stated that the logo, lettering and the entire message of the sign is illuminated. Mr. Lee stated that he has been with the business about 9 years and during his time they have sold this same design around the city in about 8 or 9 locations. Mr. Lee stated that they came to the design because it is just a standard design.

Mr. Cole stated that his problem is that it is a cookie cutter and stated that their new schools are modern and contemporary and this school is beautiful and he doesn't think the architecture in the sign matches the architecture in the building. Mr. Cole stated that it seems like they can incorporate the columns that are on the side that are stucco that matches the building and they can still achieve their board and colors so it looks like it was designed whenever the school was built. Mr. Cole stated that it is just too cookie cutter and that he is okay with the size of it and the location of it but the design doesn't reflect the school.

Mr. Lee stated that in a way of making things more sensitive to the building you are talking about two things the color and the materials and the materials today will probably be kind of scarce in getting something comparable to what is on the building. Mr. Lee stated they can change the colors and the geometry within the cabinet.

Ms. Ewald stated that one of their concerns is money and if they try to throw in stone bases or other items into the signs that will increase the cost of it and as a PTA they are a little bit cost restrained. Ms. Ewald stated that while they are trying to pull in the architectural aspects of the building with an aluminum base that is supposed to match the texture and color of the school. Ms. Ewald stated that if they have to do more she is afraid that it will take them out of their price range.

Ms. Levine stated that understanding their price constraint with the materials and stated that she is not totally opposed to this because from the distance it's not going to be as noticeable and she is more opposed to the orange and is wondering if there is a way to pick up the Terracotta tile color that is on the roof top there. Ms. Levine stated that as far as the sign being lit with the interchangeable letters she agrees that they should have a message board but she is not crazy about the Albert Hill lettering being lit. Ms. Levine stated that she knows they want to be sensitive to the school's mascot colors but don't think that necessarily fits it in this situation.

Mr. Lee stated that with colors there are a lot of things they can do with the same design to give it an entirely different look. Mr. Lee distributed a new drawing and stated that they incorporated more of the building's colors into the structure of the sign leaving the mascot colors within the text and taking the logo and changing its configuration from a square emblem to one that matches the contours of the tigers face.

Mr. Arias stated that in looking at the façade of the building the building seems to be organized on a series of panels. Mr. Arias stated that the panels define different brick textures, fenestrations and openings and the sign kind of eludes to that a little bit and there are these lines that kind of contain the Albert Hill lettering and the box below but they seem to disappear within the orange. Mr. Arias inquired are they etched into the aluminum and Mr. Lee stated that they are aluminum and Mr. Arias stated that he is wondering that something as simple as changing the colors of the frame might help it.

Ms. Almond stated that the designs that the applicant passed around is getting more towards what they are thinking and she wouldn't mind that top panel where it is black being orange. Ms. Almond stated that if they are limiting it to that small space than

that's okay even if it is a different shade of orange and she is wondering on the sides thin the amount of the beige so that it feels more like the quoins on the corner like you are framing out the panel little more. Ms. Almond stated that if they could bulk the sides up on the panel a little more so that if feel like the message board was more of an inset verses being so wide to the edges.

Mr. Arias stated that when you look at the proportions and scale of the panels that are organizing the front of the building and bring them into this sign it would be a nice connection.

Mr. Lee stated that they could do that by modifying the size of the hinge door on the message cabinet and that would reduce the width of the display area. Mr. Arias inquired about the width of the overall frame that holds the sign itself and Mr. Lee inquired if they want them to increase the size of the sign. Mr. Arias stated that the line that holds the frame together that is about <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of an inch and inquired if that width can be changed and Mr. Lee stated absolutely. Mr. Arias stated that would reflect the scale and proportion of the building.

Mr. Cole stated that sometimes they start out with the best sign was with brick that is just beautiful then you price it and can't afford it and stated that he hopes the suggestions that were made here today don't make it like a cheap imitation of what they really wanted.

Mr. Lee stated that they will never get to the granite, concrete or brick. Mr. Cole stated that a really good replication or vastly different from building and stated that be careful of the details.

Mr. Arias inquired what the back of the sign looks like and Mr. Eastman stated that it would be the same.

Mr. Cole inquired how they were going to change the letters and Ms. Ewald stated that it is done manually. Mr. Cole inquired if they asked the School Board for money and Ms. Ewald stated that they received \$2500 from the RPS School Board with the help of Glen Sturtevant and \$2500 from the Museum District Association. Mr. Cole inquired if the Museum District had seen the sign plans and Ms. Ewald stated that they presented this to them in a meeting and everybody saw the sign and it was sent to the entire neighborhood in the monthly newsletter. Mr. Cole inquired if they wrote something in support of the sign. Ms. Ewald stated that she has a letter from the President of the Museum District Association saying that they like the sign from the meeting and they agree to the donation and stated that she could forward the letter to the Committee.

Ms. Nolt stated that making the sign as simple and neutral in colors as possible and let the school colors be highlighted through the actual name of the school or even just the tiger face will help it blend into the context a little bit more than the orange body of the sign. Ms. Nolt stated that by keeping it as neutral and as minimal as possible in color would help. Ms. Ewald stated that she is more than happy with Mr. Eastman and Mr. Lee to go back and tweak the colors a little bit and change the look of the sign portion because she doesn't think it will cost more money and that the changes are workable for them money wise.

Mr. Gould stated that he likes the top panel the way that they have it and that his suggestion would be that the orange outline be changed to a neutral color.

Ms. Ewald stated that they would like to keep the top part of the sign a shade of orange not necessarily a bright orange and stated that it is kind of a middle school pride thing.

Ms. Harnsberger stated that she likes the feedback that was given and stated that if the

orange is on the school name and the tiger she thinks that will pop. Ms. Harnsberger stated that she would also say that a nice highlight would be that turquoise and stated that the detail on the building that Mr. Eastman showed would be nice in one of these aluminum stripes because they are talking about not mimicking the architectural character but to be compatible with the architectural character. Ms. Harnsberger stated that they could that by working with the Terracotta color and yellow brick and turquoise panel but keeping the orange with a neutral look with highlights that speak to the building. Mr. Lee stated that it should be easy using those color elements for the structure and try to mimic the structure around the window framing.

Mr. Arias inquired if the Albert Hill part is acrylic and Mr. Lee stated yes and that it is rounded aluminum on the face where the letters are scrolling.

Ms. Ewald stated that there is no lighting around the school and stated that it is really dark out front and the illuminating sign will brighten it up.

Mr. Gould stated that in general they are not opposed to the sign they just want it toned down a bit.

Mr. Arias stated that they should change the scale of the frame to change the proportions of the building.

Mr. Cole inquired about the landscaping and whether they need it or not and Ms. Almond stated that particular school site has very minimal landscaping and one thing that she doesn't like is when they put in school signs and put three little scrappy shrubs around them and she would just rather not do that if the sign is nice enough to stand on its own. Ms. Almond inquired if it was required to have landscaping and Mr. Eastman stated that it is a recommendation from the UDC Guidelines but not required.

Mr. Arias inquired how the base integrate with the ground and Mr. Lee stated that they dig the hole and set the steel pipe and the whole cabinet both sections the base and message center are completed in assembly and taken to the site and slide down from the top and it doesn't sat on the ground and sign rests on the poles flushed with the ground.

#### **Public Comment**

Ms. Deanna Lewis, President of Heirloom Restorations stated that she would like to offer to build a brick base for the school sign and stated that she has expert brick masons.

Mr. Arias inquired if the brick will closely match the building and Ms. Lewis stated that it will be closely matching.

Ms. Almond stated that if they want to do the brick base they will have to come back to the UDC.

Ms. Almond appointed a two-member subcommittee of Mr. Arias and Ms. Levine to work with the applicant on the sign design prior to final review.

A motion was made by Ms. Levine, seconded by Ms. Nolt, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for conceptual approval, 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 item was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on December 21, 2015.

- Aye: 8 Almond, Arias, Cole, Gould, Harnsberger, Levine, Nolt and Smith
- 5. <u>UDC No.</u> Cellar Door Encroachment into the public right-of-way adjacent to 2525 2015-33 O Street

Attachments: Staff Report to UDC

Location Map

Application & Plans

Recommendation of Approval to DPW

Ms. Nolt inquired if there was any sign of an above grade attachment historically and Mr. Eastman stated that applicant could speak to that and there are two holes that have been filled in over the years. Ms. Nolt stated that there may not be no visible signs of above grade hatches but states that it looks like historically this one did have an above grade hatch.

Mr. Cole stated that they want it to be at grade for what reason and Mr. Eastman stated that it presents an additional tripping hazard and as far as he could tell there was no precedence in the neighborhood. Mr. Eastman stated that they he talked to staff from the Department of Public Works and stated that they have been here over 14 years and knew of no precedence in the neighborhood or urban area for this type of above-ground encroachment into the right-of-way. Mr. Eastman stated that the above-ground encroachment would also need bollards as it would be a tripping hazard.

Ms. Nolt stated that there is no knowledge of encroachment applications to replicate something like this and Mr. Eastman stated that he has no knowledge of this type of encroachment like this in the city and urban area.

Mr. Cole stated that with an easement like this and it is granted and built and someone trips and hurts themselves who pays for it. Mr. Eastman stated that as part of the encroachment application there is insurance certificate that has to be supplied with the application. Mr. Cole inquired what if the owner sells the property. Mr. Eastman stated that these are question that are beyond his knowledge of the encroachment process.

Ms. Nolt stated that with the footprint of the encroachment does it limit the DPW required 5' width of a walking sidewalk and Mr. Eastman stated that there is 6' clearance from the back of the curb to where it is indicating that the encroachment will end and typically 5' is what they look for and with the bollards he would assume that they would want the bollards to extend beyond and not be flush with the encroachment, which could reduce the walkable area. Ms. Nolt inquired that there is a light pole on the bottom left of the photo and Mr. Eastman stated that there is not a light pole there currently.

Mr. Cole inquired if this area was primarily residential or businesses and Mr. Eastman stated that the immediate area is residential.

Ms. Harnsberger inquired if the applicant is proposing a light pole or is the city proposing it and Mr. Eastman stated that it is not part of the application it is just being shown in the renderings and the applicant is working with the City to try to get lights in there.

Ms. Deanna Lewis, with Heirloom Restoration on behalf of the owners, gave a brief presentation and showed renderings regarding the project.

Ms. Nolt inquired what would be the height of the door if they lowered the head and brick in that opening and Ms. Lewis stated that it would be 5' 6 or 8" and you wouldn't be able to go through it. Ms. Lewis stated that if they restore it the way that it was built he would be able to walk in and out of the basement.

Ms. Levine stated that she would not have an issue and stated that there are many situations where you have to duck whether it's going into a basement from outside or a home basement on the inside.

Ms. Nolt inquired if there any other access to the basement and Ms. Lewis stated that there is no other access into the basement except what comes through the back of the house.

Ms. Almond inquired if there were any historic photos that shows it was elevated before and stated that it may have been based on that the gap was bricked in and Ms. Lewis stated that in the packets there is a legal size photo and stated that it appears to be a low to the ground triangular object.

Mr. Arias stated that sometimes at the bottom of the stairwell there is a drain connected to the sewer system and inquire if that was the case here or is there a finished floor at the bottom of the stairs. Ms. Lewis stated that she put poured concrete on it and stated that the general store had a dirt base to it and there was about 5ft of clay in there so there was no way water was getting into it. Mr. Arias stated that if he was the owner of the building his worry would be water and infiltration. Ms. Lewis stated that what they did with the area was they put in a French drain by the doorway around the perimeter of the house because there was water coming in and that takes care of the water issues.

Mr. Gould inquired when they uncovered it was a void there and had it been backfilled with earth or actual stairs and a sidewalk. Ms. Lewis stated that on the photo that showed the walls that are all solid granite and showed a bricked up opening and stated that what they did street side was just pulled up some of the sidewalk brick and did a mini dig and they found the corner of the staircase with 6 stairs going to the opening. Mr. Gould stated that if they do a flush covering of this it would have to have some kind of structural capacity because pedestrian and bicyclist are not going to know what's underneath it and would presume that it is safe to go over it. Mr. Gould stated that the point he is trying to make is that if you have a raised thing and somebody doesn't know it's there that it is a cellar door. Ms. Lewis showed photos of what pedestrians will see and stated that the bollards would draw the attention of pedestrians. Mr. Gould inquired if there was a standard 6" reveal for the granite curb and Ms. Lewis stated that it will be a standard curb. Mr. Gould stated that sometimes vehicles and utility trucks mount curbs so he is concerned about that. Ms. Lewis stated that it is far back off the street that you wouldn't have to worry about it. Mr. Gould stated that is another reason that he would like the elevated thing because it is more visible.

Ms. Nolt inquired if they pursued historic tax credit for this project and inquired if the Department of Historic Resources been involved with it and Ms. Lewis stated yes and stated that they placed a historic easement on the property and Historic Richmond Foundation has reviewed it and they said photographic and physical evidence shows that the cellar entrance was previously present along O Street and Historic Richmond agrees that the proposed work meets the standards for rehabilitation as defined by the National Park Services. Ms. Lewis stated that if the Committee approves it they want to look at the bollard materials that they use and as far as tax credits she built the back a little bit too big but states that it was in proportion with the front of the building. Mr. Cole stated that he likes it and it looks good and stated that it is kind of iconic for that street and it is unique and a different part of Richmond's history. Mr. Cole went on to say that there is more than enough room in the front for a sidewalk and he personally

doesn't like the bollards because it takes away from the character. Ms. Lewis stated that the bollards are a nice warning and stated that the ones she put in the picture are kind of clunky.

Ms. Almond stated that the idea for bollards come from the applicant or was it suggested by the City and Ms. Lewis stated that she was thinking about bollards but didn't know if she should incorporate them into the plan. Ms. Lewis stated that she does like the idea of bollards and coming around the corner you would see it and the bollards will give you an additional warning.

Ms. Levine stated that when she first looked at this project she didn't support it because it looks like a tripping hazard and it's not keeping at all with the Church Hill but through the process she has grown to understand it. Ms. Levine stated that if it was something that was truly there originally than she sees all the reason for it to be there and she is not against or opposed to the bollards because on a corner she would want people to have a warning.

Mr. Cole stated that in this case he came in with an impression and he heard everything and has changed his way of thinking and agrees with Ms. Levine.

Ms. Nolt stated that she like the raised sloped doors as well and really appreciates the thoroughness of the drawings and research that has gone into it as they can clearly see and understand the intent from the drawings with dimensions. Ms. Nolt stated that she is accepting of the sloped raised doors and stated that they need to do the bollards specifically where they are located around the corner sensitively they can add to the streetscape.

Ms. Nolt stated that the applicant did submit suggestions regarding the bollards and assume that they would have a delicate chain between them.

Ms. Harnsberger stated that she would add that she understood the project to suggest the raised doors and stated that would be what she preferred given those two options to make people aware that there is a cellar door there.

Mr. Arias stated that he agrees with everyone and still think that with the flat doors they will be water issues down in the basement and stated that the sloped doors will keep it drier down there.

Mr. Smith stated that he doesn't agree with that because there are so many examples of it and he is still concerned with precedence for future projects.

Ms. Almond stated that if it is based on historic precedent then they are not setting any precedence other than doing what is historically appropriate.

A motion was made by Mr. Gould to recommend that the Department of Public Works grant approval, with a number of conditions. The motion was seconded by Ms. Levine but was withdrawn by Mr. Gould due to language about the bollards.

A motion was made by Ms. Nolt, seconded by Mr. Smith, that this Encroachment Item be recommended for approval, with the following conditions, and was forwarded to the City Department of Public Works:

• To follow the Applicant's design and provide three bollards on the 26th Street side of the cellar door.

• The bollards should be slender, decorative, and painted black, with black painted chain between the bollards.

• If additional bollards, or bollards in different locations are required by the Department of Public Works, the item should return to the UDC for review.

Aye: 8 - Almond, Arias, Cole, Gould, Harnsberger, Levine, Nolt and Smith

6. UDC No. 2015-34 Final Location, Character and Extent Review of the installation of modular classrooms on the Miles Jones Elementary School Site, 200 Beaufont Hills Drive

Attachments: UDC Report to CPC Staff Report to UDC Location Map

Application & Plans

Mr. Smith inquired about daylight in the modular classrooms and stated that there is only one window per classroom and Mr. Eastman stated that they had this discussion for the other modular classrooms and believes that the answer then was that these units are leased and he doesn't believe that the City would be allowed to punch holes in them. Mr. Eastman inquired if there was natural light in the hallways and the applicant stated no.

Mr. Arias stated that they did discuss adding skylights and natural daylight and stated that they said it was possible and that they would look into it.

Mr. Lloyd Schieldge with Richmond Public Schools stated that they did bring the skylights and natural daylight question in the hallway to the manufacturer and they stated that there were some structural issues that made it impossible. Mr. Schieldge stated that with this case in order for them to meet the deadline that the School Board gave them to put the children in classrooms the units they will be receiving already exist at a facility in Maryland and they are moving it piece by piece here. Mr. Schieldge stated that they are already built and stated that they would have to tear the roofs off to reconfigure them. Mr. Schieldge stated that they told them with the other one it wouldn't be impossible but if you have enough money anything is possible and stated that the structural part to make the skylights wasn't feasible.

Mr. Tommy Kranz, Assistant Superintendent with Support Services, stated that in talking with the manufacturer if it was a unit that they were going to buy it would be doable but these are units they intend to continue to re-lease throughout the country. Mr. Kranz stated that from the manufacturer's standpoint it wasn't practical to put any additional lighting in them and they were restricted to the standard units at this time.

Mr. Arias inquired how they are getting plumbing out there and getting a waste line back to the City. Mr. Arias inquired if they were going to have to tear up the playground. Mr. Eddie Evans with Balou/Justice Architects, stated that there are existing utilities on the site and that they would not have to go through a paved area, just through the grassy area.

A motion was made by Ms. Nolt, seconded by Ms. Harnsberger, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for final approval, with the following conditions:

• That the Certificate of Occupancy for the modular classrooms contains an expiration date of June 30th, 2018.

• That if the modular classrooms are needed beyond the June 30th, 2018 expiration date, the applicant must obtain an extension from the Planning Commission.

The item was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on December 21, 2015.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

# <u>ID 2015-022</u> Discussion on revising the 1992 Broad Street Streetscape Design Guidelines

Attachments: 1992 Broad Street Streetscape Design Guidelines

Mr. Mark Olinger, Director of Planning and Development Review, led a discussion with the Committee regarding revisiting the Broad Street Design Guidelines. There were suggestions that the Committee should prioritize the things that are important to corridor. The Committee also discussed seeing the encroachments on the corridor and walking the corridor. The Committee discussed breaking the group into specific sections to study and come back at the next meetings with ideas. Ultimately, the Committee decided to focus efforts on the area of Broad Street west of Belvidere Street.

[Mr. Arias departs at 12:14]

#### Adjournment

Ms. Almond adjourned the meeting at 12:32 p.m.