



City of Richmond

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

Meeting Minutes Urban Design Committee

Thursday, July 8, 2021

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

This meeting will be held through electronic participation means.

[PDRPRES](#) Public Access and Participation Instructions - Urban Design Committee
[2021.136](#)

Attachments: [Public Access and Participation Instructions - URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE](#)

Call to Order

Roll Call

Present -- 8 - * Emily Smith , * Chair Andrea Almond, * Charles Woodson, * Justin Doyle, * Eva Clarke, * Amelia Wehunt, * Jessie Gemmer and * Max Hepp-Buchanan
Absent -- 1 - * Andrea Quilici

Approval of Minutes

Secretary's Report

Mr. Dandridge stated that Planning Commission reviewed the UDC recommendations on the removal of confederate monuments, and all were forwarded to council with no recommendation, besides AP Hill and Stonewall Jackson, which were recommended by Planning Commission to Council with UDC's condition to have the Department of Public Works prioritize those intersections for pedestrians.

Mr. Dandridge also stated that Ms. Bee's Parklet was approved by the Department of Public Works.

Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

CONSENT AGENDA

Committee Member Almond asked if anyone had comments on the Consent Agenda item. She asked if the applicant was here because she had a question pertaining to restrooms in parks and if modular restrooms will be the standard going forward.

Mr. Heywood Harrison, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities representative, said this is the first time they'd considered using this type of building, and that it could be used as a prototype in other locations, especially in parks like Bryan Park. They will consider using it in the future.

Committee Member Almond asked if a condition would pertain to the material of the building.

Mr. Harrison said they can provide the material. She asked what the material at the base will be. Mr. Harrison said the whole building will be concrete, but the base will be a colored concrete that looks like stone. The roof will be concrete but look like shingles. He said they've selected the colors and can provide them to staff.

Committee Member Clarke said she looked at the pictures of the existing bathrooms compared to the new ones and said the design doesn't feel park-like or warm. She thinks that plantings should be included in the budget as opposed to an afterthought.

Michael Gibson, architect, said the plantings will be the same as existing, not the giant concrete pad from the example photos from a different location. He said the proposal is just to fix the brick pavers, make sure everything is ADA accessible, and size it for the new facility.

Committee Member Gemmer asked why the decision was made to demolish the structure instead of renovating it. Mr. Harrison said the issue was that the building was heavily vandalized, and in the process of making repairs, vandals poured concrete in the plumbing fixtures. Therefore, major work was needed; research found that purchasing a pre-fab modular building that would be modern and accessible for much less than renovating the existing facility. He didn't know the age of the existing building but it had old fixtures and wasn't ADA accessible.

Committee Member Gemmer asked if there should be more facilities. Mr. Harrison said no, there's another restroom building in the park, so it should be enough.

Committee Member Gemmer asked if the facilities are vandal-proof. Mr. Harrison said the new facility will have a mechanized locking system so that they can close facilities after hours.

Committee Member Clarke asked if there are any modular facilities with gender neutral bathrooms; Committee Member Almond agreed, asking if there are family bathrooms. Mr. Harrison said they didn't consider it at the time, but that it can be done.

Mr. Dandridge said if the item needs further discussion, it can be removed from Consent Agenda and can be moved.

1. [UDC 2021-34](#) Final location, character, and extent review of modular restrooms located in J. Bryan Park; 4308 Hermitage Road

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Location & Plans](#)

Mr. Dandridge presented the application.

Committee Member Almond asked where in the process they are. Mr. Heywood said they'd already ordered the building. She asked if that included the roof and base, and he said yes. Mr. Heywood said the only alteration that they could make now is the color.

Committee Member Almond said maybe for the next restroom renovation, that they look at inclusivity – to look at unisex or family restrooms if that's feasible. She also said next time, she wanted to look at the materials they chose beforehand. Mr. Heywood said that when they visited the facility example in Colonial Heights, they were impressed that the roof was concrete and the appearance is difficult to tell that it's concrete. Committee

Member Almond asked who the manufacturer was. He responded it was CXT, and they're built in a factory in Virginia.

Committee Member Gemmer asked if the pattern will change by side, if it's horizontal or vertical lap. Mr. Gibson said it's all vertical lap.

Committee Member Almond asked about water fountains. Mr. Harrison said they're disabled for COVID now, but they hope to have them operable in the future.

Councilperson Jordan wanted to weigh in on the family/gender neutral bathrooms. She said she values the question and asked if the architect would look into that and see if it's too late, and what that additional cost would be. Mr. Heywood said it wouldn't be available for this particular facility, but they could look into that in the future. Mr. Chris Frelke said they give \$0.5M for Capital Projects, and that it's around \$300k for this project, and this project is limited but the challenges are funding. This particular site has been without a bathroom for 3 years, so they wanted to get a bathroom as soon as possible.

Committee Member Doyle asked how Friends of Bryan Park is involved. Mr. Frelke said they've been involved the whole time, and they really just want to see a bathroom there.

Committee Member Almond opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

Committee Member Almond opened the floor for Committee Comment.

Committee Member Smith said the guidelines have language about intended users including families, etc. and they should consider this moving forward. She said questions of authenticity, in terms of the finish, and in the future they should consider the material of the building as to not look like theme park restrooms.

A motion was made by Hepp-Buchanan, seconded by Smith, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for approval with conditions to the Planning Commission with the following conditions:

- final exterior colors be submitted to staff for review
- Applicant plan new, native, shade trees in the general vicinity of the restroom, and the location to be coordinated with the City Arborist.
- applicant submit a cost analysis to staff, demonstrating the benefit of installing a modular restroom facility instead of reusing the existing building prior to demolition
- Inclusivity be considered in the design of future modular park restrooms

Committee Member Woodson wanted to see if Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan would consider adding that trees be added, instead of hinging on funding. Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan said he would consider adding a condition for additional tree plantings.

Committee Member Clarke wanted to add in conditions that since this building was supposed to be a prototype, that the Committee add that family restrooms should be added in this prototype model.

Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan said that he'd be fine including that in his motion.

A motion was made by Hepp-Buchanan, seconded by Smith, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for approval with conditions to the Planning Commission with the following conditions:

- final exterior colors be submitted to staff for review
- Applicant plan new, native, shade trees in the general vicinity of the restroom, and the location to be coordinated with the City Arborist.
- applicant submit a cost analysis to staff, demonstrating the benefit of installing a modular restroom facility instead of reusing the existing building prior to demolition
- Inclusivity be considered in the design of future modular park restrooms

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Emily Smith , Chair Andrea Almond, Charles Woodson, Justin Doyle, Eva Clarke, Jessie Gemmer and Max Hepp-Buchanan

Abstain -- 1 - Amelia Wehunt

REGULAR AGENDA

2. [UDC 2021-32](#) Final location, character, and extent review of the removal of a monument and pedestal; 1900 Stuart Avenue

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Location & Plans](#)
[Public Comment](#)
[Public Comment \(2\)](#)
[UDC 2021-32 Public Comment \(3\)](#)
[UDC 2021-32 Public Comment \(4\)](#)

Mr. Dandridge presented the application.

Committee Member Almond asked if the design is proposed as leaving the plantings as-is in the center.

Committee Member Almond opened the floor for public comment.

Councilperson Jordan said she's the representative for this district and lives about a block away from the pedestal. She has received a number of emails from neighbors, and she has comments. She believes this one merits some consideration and discussion separate from what has been the discussion for other monuments. When she read the ordinance passed by Council, this statue is not listed among the statues, so she asked if the City can even remove this.

Mr. Frelke said that he conferred with the City attorney, and he said this is a procedural portion and council will have to make an ordinance for this and Wickham in Monroe Park. He said that this monument was built in 1930, and this was done in the Jim Crow era and it has similarities to other monuments. Council will have the ultimate power to do it, but because it's a war memorial, it must be kept together.

Councilperson Jordan asked what the state of the statue is. Mr. Frelke said it's in secure storage, but they will look into it before this goes to Planning Commission.

Councilperson Jordan said that she saw an old article from RTD about the dedication of

this statue and it definitely had Confederate undertones. Mr. Frelke said that there will be options for other things down the road for the space, but he believed that the history of this was in Jim Crow era to send messages in that front.

Committee Member Almond closed public comment and opened the floor for committee discussion.

A motion was made by Hepp-Buchanan, seconded by Doyle, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for approval to the Planning Commission. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 6 - Emily Smith , Chair Andrea Almond, Justin Doyle, Amelia Wehunt, Jessie Gemmer and Max Hepp-Buchanan

No -- 1 - Eva Clarke

Abstain -- 1 - Charles Woodson

3. [UDC 2021-33](#) Final location, character, and extent review of a replacement Fire Station #12; 2223 W. Cary Street

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Location & Plans](#)
[Masonry Samples](#)
[Conceptual Rendering](#)

Mr. Dandridge presented the application.

Committee Member Gemmer asked if the brick work has relief, and if so, how much is there. Michael Gibson, architect, said that the reveal within the brick work within increments of a half inch. He said the photos show really deep recesses, but he says they're at the setback line, so everything has as much of a reveal without going over the property line. Committee Member Gemmer asked if it's even a noticeable shadow, and if it's a cast stone lining at the non-window wall openings.

Mr. Gibson said the proportion of the room on the front don't allow for the same detailing, and they were trying to harken back to the original structure which had arches. He said adding windows along the pedestrian levels weren't allowed, so they added like the black brick at the bottom and create a welcoming experience along the façade.

She said the side reads contextual/historical/Fan, but the front is really modern. She asked if the front façade could lean more towards the historical context. Her other question is for dark storefront instead of aluminum. Mr. Gibson said he didn't have an issue with it, but he said the darker detailing with the brick is there, but the aluminum seems to provide some relief, but he said it could go either way.

Louis Goode from Special Capital Projects said the aluminum gives good contrast which is appropriate for the overall character. He said as far as the Addison Street side having more of a historic look, the community meeting comments wanted to incorporate both modern and historic looks. When the project came for Conceptual Review, it was noted that UDC wanted to keep both contexts of historic and modern. Gemmer then asked about the red doors. Mr. Goode said the red doors were not on the table anymore, since Fire Station 17 was supposed to have red doors but they've since turned purple. He said

going with a darker color would be the best suit for the project, not to have the fading issue, and keep in line with the rest of the building.

Woodson said he loved the new design, but wanted to suggest to add personality and human interest would be a small statue of a “fire dog” with a floppy fire hat.

Doyle said he appreciated Gemmer’s comments and wanted to ask Mr. Dandridge if there would be a public art component, and if not, if public art is considered.

Mr. Goode said they’ve had conversations with the Public Art Commission and there’s a meeting next week to incorporate public art into the firehouse project. They’re going to do an RFP for an artist, whether it’s exterior or interior, the artist hasn’t been selected yet.

Clarke said she’d love to see public art in front of the fire station since it’s a pedestrian-friendly street and it would make it more accessible. Mr. Goode said the issue is the restraints they have on the site. The doors for the fire truck would not allow for a statue to safely be there for trucks to move in & out. The only other spot for art would be front door. There is limited site space and using every inch for the building itself. Clarke asked about the location of the bike rack could be a location for a statue or interesting bike rack. Mr. Goode said he’ll bring it up at the PAC next week. He said they need to select the artist first but it was something that could be suggested.

Committee Member Almond said she’s also on PAC and said they’re in the process of working through PAC projects/RFPs and planning for future projects, and when we create the subcommittee to work on this, they will put together an RFP that could say the spot or type of art.

Mr. Dandridge said that for staff conditions – if the reveal isn’t going to be as much, there should be arched design on main façade. He said the comment about less dark brick was specifically aimed at the corbeling underneath the cornice and underneath the main window on the tower – it creates a reverse castellation design which feels really heavy like a fortress, so he’s okay with a different colored brick. The main decorative portions could be the same color as the brick.

Mr. Elmond Taylor from Richmond Fire Department (RFD) said this is the oldest fire station and needs replacement because of internal issues. He wanted to make 2 observations: they believe RFD is the 4th or 5th oldest fire department in the nation and that speaks to the historical organization, so the more traditional design on Addison speaks to history and past. Even though RFD is rooted in their past, they’re not limited to it. With regard to public art, Mr. Taylor mentioned, with PAC, RFD was asked what they wanted to see. But the concept of seeing an arson canine or fire dog, given the site constraints, certainly they’d be interested in seeing that if it’s possible.

Committee Member Almond had questions about the tower piece, which feels unresolved. She asked what the thought was behind the RFD logo. Mr. Gibson said public wanted to see a bell, and wanted to add some artwork to the relief. They both became a ‘showy’ item. Almond asked if it’s an official logo. Mr. Taylor said it’s the font on the logo on the RFD badges.

Committee Member Almond asked if the neighborhood group has seen the newest iteration. Mr. Goode said no, they just wanted to incorporate their initial comments.

Committee Member Almond asked about the opening on the Addison St. side. She said it feels out of scale and it looks like a window into nothing. Mr. Gibson said yes, it was

incorporated from the February comments.

Committee Member Clarke asked if there could be a green wall to soften it because the tower is big, the bell is small, and the logo looks small and delicate. Committee Member Gemmer said she agreed and because most will be on Cary St. and you'd see the base of the building more. She asked if they could move the bell to be more visible from the other side. She said adding something that gives a reason for the opening would be nice. Mr. Goode said that the 2nd level has a terrace that firefighters can go out on and grill, so it's not a void. The RFD logo could also be on the 2nd side to break up the large opening. He said maybe the RFD insignia could be on the opening at the same level, so oncoming traffic could see it from Cary St. Almond said it might compete with the "12 RFD" on the side.

Almond suggested making a subcommittee, maybe Gemmer and Quilici, and let them regroup with RFD on the details, particularly about the tower. She thinks they won't be resolved today and wants to get the process moving forward. Mr. Goode said they really need to get the project under construction ASAP, and they have to obtain approval from CPC, so if it helps RFD to have a subcommittee, then they would be open to it. Mr. Taylor agreed.

Committee Member Almond opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

Committee Member Almond opened the floor for committee discussion. Mr. Dandridge said that the subcommittee could be an addition to the conditions.

A motion was made by Gemmer, seconded by Woodson, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for approval with conditions to the Planning Commission with the following conditions:

- along Addison Street, the applicant consider working with DPW to install larger tree wells and a species of street tree that does not grow to a mature height that will impact overhead utilities.
- the final design keep all brick detailing, as proposed, but utilize less dark brick around the windows and bottom of cornice, and rather utilize darker window framing and dark metal coping on the roof line to create contemporary, darker accents.
- the CMU being proposed at the ground level be rusticated, or a smooth, finished appearance
- the projecting corner bay have a more transparent and contemporary form that sets it apart from the main massing of the building.
- public art related to the Fire Department be incorporated on the site
- pedestrian scale elements be incorporated on the ground-level along Addison Street
- the project team meet with a UDC Subcommittee, formed July 8, 2021, to discuss the final design of the corner projecting bay, and any other details mentioned by the Urban Design Committee; updated renderings and construction drawings be submitted to staff for review and final approval by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Urban Design Committee.

Committee Member Gemmer said it wouldn't be possible to add more windows on Addison, but something should be done to address the first floor. Mr. Dandridge said this would be forwarded to CPC with these conditions, and he would setup a date for the subcommittee to meet.

A motion was made by Gemmer, seconded by Woodson, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for approval with conditions to the Planning Commission with the following conditions:

- along Addison Street, the applicant consider working with DPW to install larger tree wells and a species of street tree that does not grow to a mature height that will impact overhead utilities.
- the final design keep all brick detailing, as proposed, but utilize less dark brick around the windows and bottom of cornice, and rather utilize darker window framing and dark metal coping on the roof line to create contemporary, darker accents.
- the CMU being proposed at the ground level be rusticated, or a smooth, finished appearance
- the projecting corner bay have a more transparent and contemporary form that sets it apart from the main massing of the building.
- public art related to the Fire Department be incorporated on the site
- pedestrian scale elements be incorporated on the ground-level along Addison Street
- the project team meet with a UDC Subcommittee, formed July 8, 2021, to discuss the final design of the corner projecting bay, and any other details mentioned by the Urban Design Committee; updated renderings and construction drawings be submitted to staff for review and final approval by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Urban Design Committee.

The motion carried by the following vote:

- Aye --** 6 - Emily Smith , Chair Andrea Almond, Charles Woodson, Justin Doyle, Eva Clarke and Jessie Gemmer
- Excused --** 1 - Max Hepp-Buchanan
- Abstain --** 1 - Amelia Wehunt

4. [UDC 2021-35](#) Conceptual location, character, and extent review of a temporary GRTC Transfer Station; 808 E. Clay Street.

Attachments: [Location & Plans](#)
[Nicholas Smith Public Comment](#)

Mr. Dandridge presented the application.

Smith wanted to know if the restroom facilities be moved to the new location in Dec 2021 when the project is relocated.

Ms. Dironna Clarke from DPW & GRTC liaison said that currently, the drivers were utilizing the Public Safety Safety, but when they move, there are currently no restrooms on site now. The restrooms would be temporary; otherwise, the closest would be City Hall. For the drivers' morale, the City does care about their needs and the drivers always say there aren't restrooms at their locations.

Almond asked if they're for the public too, or just drivers. Jon Olier from Kimley Horn said that the restrooms are specifically for drivers, not the public. Emily DelRoss from GRTC said it really impacts the schedule when drivers have to go long distances to go to the bathroom. Mr. Oliver said they're actively coordinating on lots of suppliers to understand the cost, maintenance, and utilities to understand what they could do. Committee Member Wehunt asked how they'd restrict access to just the drivers. Mr. Oliver said they will discuss that with the manufacturer.

Committee Member Gemmer asked if the public had restroom access before. Ms. Clarke said Public Safety Building was a DPW facilities bldg. and secured by security, so she thinks just City Hall and Social Services bldg. were options. Committee Member Gemmer said even 5-10 years is a long time to not have restrooms for riders. She also said some of the bathroom examples don't look ADA accessible.

Committee Member Doyle asked GRTC how long they anticipate using the site. Ms. Clarke said they're working to align the future of a downtown transfer center/transit mall and hope that it will be less than the 5-10 year horizon, they hope it will be 2-5 years with federal funding and infrastructure. Committee Member Doyle said the City should make this site as equitable as possible. He said there should be public restroom facilities on site for riders, and they should be accessible. Committee Member Almond said there should also be drinking fountains and that they should invest in temporary, large-scale planters in pedestrian areas and partner with Venture Richmond.

Committee Member Woodson said there should be a focus on restrooms for drivers and riders.

Committee Member Wehunt asked if the applicant could explain the purpose of the fence. Ms. Dironna Clarke said that the fence is there to help with safety concerns with the bus circulation patterns and trying to limit for pedestrians and patrons to access the site.

Committee Member Wehunt asked if the entrance at 8th is the only ADA-accessible route, or if there are other entrance locations. Mr. Oliver said Leigh/9th is ADA accessible ramp.

Committee Member Wehunt asked if the design of the transfer center meets zoning requirements for off-street parking, related to islands and landscape buffers, etc. Ms. Dironna Clarke said she was not sure and would have to look into it.

Committee Member Doyle asked if this is a potential permanent location for a transfer center. Ms. DelRoss said they're continuing to look for a more permanent site. Almond asked if GRTC is looking for one central transfer station or several dispersed. Ms. DelRoss said they're looking for a mixed-use and grander pedestrian amenities. Ms. Clarke said that their office is fighting for a downtown transfer center, whether it's a transit mall or brick and mortar, and as city continues to bloom, we need to ensure there's equitable access to transit. Going outside of City center sometimes makes transit more inequitable.

Committee Member Gemmer asked about the shade structures – if they are symbols within the plan are based on some data, because she believes there should be more. Mr. Oliver said they are conceptually back-to-back shelters and they're showing 1 per bus bay, and including additional benches to at least provide seating for patrons. Gemmer asked the length of them. Mr. Oliver said they're 20 x 4. Mr. La Hood said they'll actually be about twice the length as shown on the graphic. Ms. Clarke said they'll be removing the current shelters and placing shelters in compliance with UDC

Committee Member Almond opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

Committee Member Almond opened the floor for committee discussion.

A motion was made by Woodson, seconded by Clarke, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for approval with conditions to the Planning Commission

with the following conditions:

- Applicant consider alternate fencing material; if chain-link fencing is utilized it be coated in a black vinyl finish.
- Applicant consider additional pedestrian access points from all sides of the lot.
- Applicant consider additional bus shelters and shade structures with in the space.
- Applicant include specifications on site features such as bus shelters, benches, and bike racks with the final submission
- Applicant investigate connectivity from the transfer center portion of the lot to the parking area of the lot
- Applicant consider a more permanent restroom facility design that is accessible, and open to bus drivers and bus patrons
- Applicant consider the inclusion of a drinking fountains on site
- Applicant consider the inclusion of large scale planters for the site, partnering with an entity that can actively maintain them.

Committee Member Wehunt asked if Mr. Dandridge was reviewing the plan relative to the zoning ordinance. He said he hasn't discussed with zoning division, but he said he can run it past them. Committee Member Wehunt said her concern is holding city projects to the same level of accountability/regulations of private projects.

Committee Member Gemmer asked besides permanent shade trees, what other zoning would apply to the site that would contradict. Wehunt said landscape islands and landscape buffer, and she doesn't know if chain-link fence would be allowed.

Committee Member Clarke said there was conversation about separation parking area from transfer area. She asked that instead of fencing, there could be benches and planter boxes. Committee Member Almond said they don't want people walking people through the bus area. Committee Member Woodson said that staff recommendation says not to use a chain link fence, and it should be black. Gemmer said she's sensitive to people crossing path of the bus. She said people will probably be crossing there anyway, and there should be an access point or landscape buffer because 8th/Clay is at grade.

Ms. Clarke said they could look at potentially a small access point could be there, but they would have to look at the safety of the site first. She asked if Woodson would add that to his motion. He and Clarke agreed.

A motion was made by Woodson, seconded by Clarke, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for approval with conditions to the Planning Commission with the following conditions:

- Applicant consider alternate fencing material; if chain-link fencing is utilized it be coated in a black vinyl finish.
- Applicant consider additional pedestrian access points from all sides of the lot.
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- Applicant consider the inclusion of a drinking fountains on site
- Applicant consider the inclusion of large scale planters for the site, partnering with an entity that can actively maintain them.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Emily Smith , Chair Andrea Almond, Charles Woodson, Justin Doyle, Eva Clarke,
Amelia Wehunt and Jessie Gemmer

Excused -- 1 - Max Hepp-Buchanan

OTHER BUSINESS

Adjournment