



Board of Architectural Review

DATE: May 16, 2018
TO: Board of Architectural Review Chair and Members
THROUGH: Jason Sutphin, Community Development Division Chief *TBH For JS*
FROM: Tommy Scibilia, BAR Liaison *(TS)*
SUBJECT: **Fairfax Gateway – Work Session**

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Relevant regulations
2. Elevations
3. Plans
4. Staff Report 3/28/18

Nature of Request

1. Case Number:	BAR-18-00120
2. Address:	11101 and 11091 Fairfax Boulevard, 11160 Lee Highway
3. Request:	Mixed Use Development
4. Applicant:	FF Realty IV LLC
5. Applicant's Representative:	Sara V. Mariska
6. Status of Representative:	Agent
7. Zoning:	CR Commercial Retail

BACKGROUND

The site is located in Kamp Washington, situated between Fairfax Boulevard and Lee Highway, and is immediately to the west of the Jermantown Cemetery. The site is currently improved with five commercial buildings located on four separate parcels that make up the site total 8.33 acres. The subject site has most recently been used for motor vehicle related businesses, and a former productions and manufacturing company vacated the larger warehouse structure in 2012.

This project was originally approved by the BAR on March 16, 2016 (building architecture) and September 7, 2016 (landscaping and site elements). The project has since switched hands and the current applicant has made revisions to the plan and architecture, for which the BAR must recommend action on the major certificate of appropriateness to City Council.

The BAR held a work session with the applicant on March 28, 2018. Comments included:

- The material quality is important so that the development maintains its value over time.
- There has been a marked reduction in brick and other materials that helped make the design identifiable and unique.
- There are no outdoor spaces, such as porches or balconies, proposed for building 400 residential units at street level facing Lee Highway.
- The awnings shown on building 500 may give a false impression that this ground floor space is commercial, rather than private residential amenity space.
- This development should both fit into the fabric of the City and maintain its own identity.
- Focus on the pedestrian experience within the site, for instance people parking in front of building 400 and walking to building 600 to eat at a restaurant, or residents walking from their building to the pool.
- Consider employing elevational changes to the ground floor residences to add articulation and to provide privacy.
- Consider adding some kind of setback or buffer between the dog park and immediately adjacent ground floor residences of building 300.
- The traffic circle would likely not function as a gathering place, but as a focal point for the development. Design this space to relate to the architecture of the development. Avoid creating a “compound” look with a large masonry wall sign.
- Areas of high traffic should be designed carefully to use perhaps a different paving surface than scored concrete. Paving could also be used to inform what areas could be demarcated for uses such as block parties.
- The base two stories should be high quality material and articulated to relate to the pedestrian scale; upper stories have more flexibility in materiality.
- Mass of the buildings should relate to one another and to their use.
- Example images of successful screening methods/privacy-enhancements for ground-floor residences in heavy traffic areas would be helpful as references. Methods could include low walls, vegetative screening, and elevation changes.
- Focus on the materiality and design of the entrances to the development, namely the entrance from Lee Highway through building 400.

PROPOSAL

The applicant has returned for another work session with revised architectural and landscape proposals. Attachment 4, the previous staff report, has a more detailed description of the 2016 approved design and the major differences between that approval and the March 28 work session submission. The remainder of this report will focus on the changes made to the design since the previous work session.

Use:

The BAR’s purview should be focused on architecture, landscaping, and site amenities, not the use of the spaces themselves; however the use of the space should have a direct relationship with what the space looks like, which is something on which the BAR should comment. Since the work session, the

applicant redistributed the ground floor spaces of buildings 400 and 600. Whereas in the last proposal all of the retail and office uses were concentrated on the ground floor of 600 and the ground floor of 400 was strictly residential, the updated proposal places the office space in building 400 and the displaced residential units in 600. Therefore, building 400 now has a commercial presence on Lee Highway not proposed at the previous work session. Most of the indoor residential amenity space would be concentrated on the ground floor of buildings 300 and 500. See attachment 3 for a ground floor use exhibit.

Site:

No changes have been made to the site layout since the work session.

Architecture:

Changes to the approved architecture can be seen most clearly in attachment 2, which has the 2016 approved architecture and the most current proposed architecture. Staff added the March 28 work session elevations to the applicant's submittals for quick comparisons of the changes made, summarized below by building.

300

- All balconies removed from the side (north and south) elevations
 - In the plan sheets of attachment 3, balconies are still shown in these locations
- Storefront and suspended awnings have been added at the ground floor outside the residential amenity space at the building's northwest corner
- Black fabric awnings on ground floor of the front (west) elevation have been redistributed
- The colors of the extruded window bay on the front (west) elevation have been changed from white to two shades of gray, closer to the approved 2016 window bay colors
- Some portions of the cementitious panels on the top floor have been changed from white to warm gray
- Some window panel colors have been changed from white to gray or to the dominant surrounding material color

400

- A section of balconies was removed south of the central bay of the west elevation
 - In the plan sheets of attachment 3, balconies are still shown in this location
- Storefront has been added at the ground floor outside the office space at the building's southwest corner
- Storefront and arched windows removed from northeast corner of the building
- Entrance added to the north façade of the eastern leg of the building
- Vertical section of siding replaced with panels on the north façade of the eastern leg of the building; minor roofline change at this location
- Panels at the top floor of the southeast corner of the building were changed from beige to white
- Some window panel colors have been changed from white to gray

500

- Three of five sections of balconies have been removed from the west elevation
 - In the plan sheets of attachment 3, balconies are still shown in these locations
- Storefront and awnings removed from residential portions of the ground floor
- Increased color and material variation at ground level of front (east) elevation, very similar to the approved 2016 colors and materials
- The colors of the extruded window bays have been changed from white to two shades of gray, closer to the approved 2016 window bay colors
- Color changes on the south elevation, very similar to the approved 2016 colors scheme
- Some window panel colors have been changed from white to gray or to the dominant surrounding material color

600

- Increased color and material variation at ground level of north, east, and south elevations, very similar to the approved 2016 colors and materials
- The colors of the extruded window bays have been changed from white to two shades of gray, closer to the approved 2016 window bay colors
- Color changes on the south elevation, very similar to the approved 2016 colors scheme
- Color change on the north elevation just south of the warehouse-style section of the building closest to Fairfax Boulevard

Physical material and paint samples will be required for future consideration.

Open Space:

The applicant has proposed several usable outdoor open spaces. These have not changed location or configuration since the previous proposal, and include:

- Traffic circle with landscaping and masonry development signage
- Contemplative park closest to Jermantown Cemetery, with paved “shards”
- Park space southeast of the traffic circle connected to the contemplative park, with a paved seating area and an oblong grass lawn
- Plaza in front of building 500 with street trees, landscaped planting beds, benches, and a focal tree
- Pool deck and patio behind building 300, discussed more in the amenities section below
- Dog park south of building 300, discussed more in the amenities section below
- Olmsted Park, heavily landscaped area in front of the western leg of building 400 with a circular paved plaza, discussed more in the amenities section below

Landscaping:

The applicant has supplied a detailed landscape plan with this submission, as requested by staff. The conceptual plan in the previous work session submission more or less aligns with the current

submission. Canopy trees include hightower willow oaks along the main north-south roadway, columnar sweetgums along the two east-west roads, Japanese zelkovas along the site's east and west property lines, and October glory red maples in the traffic circle and along Fairfax Boulevard and Lee Highway. Smaller ornamental trees including Japanese maples and purple leaf plum trees are proposed along Fairfax Boulevard and Lee Highway closer to the building faces, within Olmsted park (building 400), and in the two park spaces in the northeastern portion of the site. Shrubs are proposed throughout the site including at the bases of the buildings, within and surrounding the various open spaces described above, at the property edges, and in planting beds at the bases of canopy trees.

No details on retaining walls, fences, railings, or gates have been provided at this time.

Hardscape:

The applicant has supplied, along with the detailed landscape plan, a detailed hardscape plan (see attachment 3). The materials include concrete pavement and concrete pavers in different colors and different pattern arrangements. The main sidewalks on site would be natural colored concrete with regular square scoring. "Coachella Sand" colored concrete would be used along Fairfax Boulevard in front of building 600, in the "shards" of the contemplative park, in radial bands around the traffic circle in front of building 600, and at the pool and patio amenity space behind building 300. Pavers in a herringbone arrangement are proposed in the crosswalks, along the Fairfax Boulevard side of building 600, at the south side of the traffic circle, within the contemplative park, and in a curved band through the Olmsted Park plaza. Pavers in a random arrangement are proposed in the irregularly-shaped seating area in the open space southeast of the traffic circle, around the base of the focal tree in front of building 500, around the pool behind building 300, and within the Olmsted Park plaza. The pavers come in two color schemes, "Desert Blend" and "Chesapeake Blend". Samples have not been provided at this time.

Lighting:

Street light locations have been shown on the plans, indicated by crosses, however no details have been provided for these fixtures or for building-mounted lighting.

Amenities:

Outdoor amenity areas proposed include the pool and patio to the rear of building 300, as well as a dog park immediately south of building 300. The pool deck and patio indicate a variety of furniture for residents, including deck chairs, a fire pit, grill and cooking area, and other seating, but details have not yet been provided on these items. The dog park includes a paved seating area with benches on its west side, and benches are shown inside the fenced area as well. The dog park is separated from the ground floor residences of building 300 by a row of shrubs across its eastern half, and a double row of HVAC units on the western half.

Bench locations are shown in the plans, and are called out as "Balustrade Bench" by Landscape Forms, however staff cannot find this item online. The bike racks proposed in front of buildings 400 and 600 would be metal loop racks by Landscape Forms (<http://www.landscapeforms.com/en-US/product/Pages/35-Loop-Bike-Rack.aspx>). There are no details at this time for the furniture shown

in the seating areas of the park southeast of the traffic circle, and no furniture is shown in either the contemplative park space or in Olmsted Park. There is a statue proposed in Olmsted Park plaza called “Gravity” by Terra Sculpture (<http://terrasculpture.com/gallery/stainless-steel/gravity/>).

Appurtenances:

HVAC units and transformers have been shown on the plans in attachment 3. They are ground mounted, proposed along the rear bases of the buildings. Most of these appurtenances are screened by ample landscaping, however the HVAC units at the east and west rears of building 400 have minimal landscape screening from view on Lee Highway. The double row of HVAC units north of the dog park, mentioned above, are screened from the main north-south road and patio amenity space by landscaping, but would be visible to building 300 residents and dog park users. The transformers shown northwest of building 400 are shown with shrubs behind them along the property line, but they would likely be visible from along the interior north-south road on site.

Dumpster locations and screening details have not been provided at this time.

ANALYSIS

Community Appearance Plan:

The following excerpts from the Community Appearance Plan are relevant to this application.

Because of the variety of existing styles and the lack of an historical architectural reference along the corridors, no single architectural style is favored over others. Both modern styles and traditional architecture are appropriate – if well-designed and appropriately sited (50).

The proposal exhibits a good balance of traditional architectural forms in a contemporary development. Since the work session, the applicant has added back some of the ground floor material and color variation found in the original approval from 2016 that adds a modern flair and visual interest to the pedestrian realm. The hardscape, though simplified from the 2016 approval, has been amended since the work session to incorporate various colors and textures to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Traditional materials such as brick, wood, and stone have survived the various architectural trends over time and exhibit longevity and quality. These materials are recommended in future developments within the corridor in lieu of the more modern glass, metal and concrete panel construction (51).

The overall amount of brick has been significantly reduced from the 2016 approval. Since the March 28 work session, the applicant has not increased the overall amount of brick on the buildings, as recommended by the BAR. Its use is still largely limited to the first story of the buildings. In certain areas it is used in higher proportions, such as the front (west) elevation of building 300 and the flat-roofed portion of building 600.

Colors for use on buildings and signs should be selected for their compatibility with the natural features and existing development found in and adjacent to the corridors (51).

Staff finds the overall color palette to be appropriate, and the revised colors are more in line with the 2016 approval. The applicant has also changed many areas of white panel to gray or the color of the surrounding façade, reducing the number of sharp color contrasts.

Comprehensive Plan:

The following excerpt from the 2012 Comprehensive Plan are relevant to this application.

Community Appearance objective CA-3: Encourage exemplary site and building design, construction, and maintenance (105).

Staff finds the proposal to be an overall improvement to the existing condition of the site, however since the work session, the proposal has lost façade articulation in the removal of entire sections of balconies. These features serve to both break up long building faces and increase outdoor activity onsite.

Olmsted Park is proposed to be heavily landscaped with shrubs, most of which are evergreen species. This dense planting scheme may appear busy or crowded when the plants are fully grown, making this area seem remote and uninviting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As this is a work session, there will be no specific staff recommendations in this report. Staff requests that final submissions for consideration by the BAR include the following:

- Information and details on walls, fences, railings, gates, lighting fixtures, amenities (benches, seating, fire pit, trellises, cooking station), and dumpster locations and screening
- Consistency between plans and elevations
- Material and color samples
- Incorporation of any feedback given by the BAR at this work session and at the March 28 work session

RELEVANT REGULATIONS

§3.7.4. Architectural control overlay district

B. Certificate of appropriateness required

Except as specified in §3.7.4.C, below, all development in the architectural control overlay district shall be subject to the approval of a certificate of appropriateness in accordance with the provisions of §6.5.

C. Exceptions

The architectural control overlay district shall not apply to signs, unless otherwise specified, or to the following uses:

1. Single-family detached;
2. Duplex dwellings, after initial approval and construction; and
3. Townhouses, after initial approval and construction.

§5.4.5. Powers and duties

B. Final decisions

The board of architectural review shall be responsible for final decisions regarding the following:

1. Certificates of appropriateness, major (§6.5)

§6.5.1. Applicability

Certificates of appropriateness shall be reviewed in accordance with the provisions of §6.5.

A. A certificate of appropriateness shall be required:

1. To any material change in the appearance of a building, structure, or site visible from public places (rights-of-way, plazas, squares, parks, government sites, and similar) and located in a historic overlay district (§3.7.2), the Old Town Fairfax Transition Overlay District (§3.7.3), or in the Architectural Control Overlay District (§3.7.4). For purposes of §6.5, “material change in appearance” shall include construction; reconstruction; exterior alteration, including changing the color of a structure or substantial portion thereof; demolition or relocation that affects the appearance of a building, structure or site;

§6.5.3. Certificate of appropriateness types

A. Major certificates of appropriateness

1. Approval authority

(a) General

Except as specified in §6.5.3.B.2(b), below, the board of architectural review shall have authority to approve major certificates of appropriateness.

(b) Alternative (in conjunction with other reviews)

Alternatively, and in conjunction with special use reviews, planned development reviews, special exceptions or map amendments (rezoning), the city council may approve major certificates of appropriateness.

§6.5.6. Action by decision-making body

A. General (involving other review by city council)

After receiving the director's report on proposed certificates of appropriateness, which do not involve other reviews described below, the board of architectural review (BAR) shall review the proposed certificates of appropriateness in accordance with the approval criteria of §6.5.7. The BAR may request modifications of applications in order that the proposal may better comply with the approval criteria. Following such review, the BAR may approve, approve with modifications or conditions, or disapprove the certificate of appropriateness application, or it may table or defer the application.

B. Other reviews

1. Prior to taking action on special use reviews, planned development reviews, and map amendments (rezoning), the city council shall refer proposed certificates of appropriateness to the BAR for review in accordance with the approval criteria of §6.5.7.
2. In conjunction with special use reviews, planned development reviews, special exceptions and map amendments (rezoning), the city council may review the proposed certificate of appropriateness in accordance with the approval criteria of §6.5.7. The city council may request modifications of applications in order that the proposal may better comply with the approval criteria. Following such review, the city council may approve, approve with modifications or conditions, or disapprove the certificate of appropriateness application, or it may table or defer the application.

§6.5.7. Approval criteria

A. General

1. Certificate of appropriateness applications shall be reviewed for consistency with the applicable provisions of this chapter, any adopted design guidelines, and the community appearance plan.
2. Approved certificates of appropriateness shall exhibit a combination of architectural elements including design, line, mass, dimension, color, material, texture, lighting, landscaping, roof line and height conform to accepted architectural principles and exhibit external characteristics of demonstrated architectural and aesthetic durability.

§6.5.9. Action following approval

- A. Approval of any certificate of appropriateness shall be evidenced by issuance of a certificate of appropriateness, including any conditions, signed by the director or the chairman of the board of architectural review. The director shall keep a record of decisions rendered.
- B. The applicant shall be issued the original of the certificate, and a copy shall be maintained on file in the director's office.

§6.5.10. Period of validity

A certificate of appropriateness shall become null and void if no significant improvement or alteration is made in accordance with the approved application within 18 months from the date of approval. On written request from an applicant, the director may grant a single extension for a period of up to six months if, based upon submissions from the applicant, the director finds that conditions on the site and in the area of the proposed project are essentially the same as when approval originally was granted.

§6.5.11. Time lapse between similar applications

A. The director will not accept, hear or consider substantially the same application for a proposed certificate of appropriateness within a period of 12 months from the date a similar application was denied, except as provided in §6.5.11.B, below.

B. Upon disapproval of an application, the director and/or board of architectural review may make recommendations pertaining to design, texture, material, color, line, mass, dimensions or lighting. The director and/or board of architectural review may again consider a disapproved application if within 90 days of the decision to disapprove the applicant has amended his application in substantial accordance with such recommendations.

§6.5.12. Transfer of certificates of appropriateness

Approved certificates of appropriateness, and any attached conditions, run with the land and are not affected by changes in tenancy or ownership.

§6.5.13. Appeals

A. Appeals to city council

Final decisions on certificates of appropriateness made may be appealed to city council within 30 days of the decision in accordance with §6.22.

B. Appeals to court

Final decisions of the city council on certificates of appropriateness may be appealed within 30 days of the decision in accordance with §6.23.