



Board of Architectural Review

DATE: June 20, 2018
TO: Board of Architectural Review Chair and Members
THROUGH: Jason Sutphin, Community Development Division Chief **JDS**
FROM: Tommy Scibilia, BAR Liaison **TS**
SUBJECT: **Fairfax Gateway**

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Relevant regulations
2. Plans and Elevations
3. Elevations Comparison – 5/23/18 Work Session

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: Robert Brant
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. To the north of the site is the intersection of Bevan Drive and Fairfax Boulevard, to the west is a gas station and a Dominion Power property, to the south is Hilltop Shop 'N Go Center, and to the east is Jermantown Cemetery and Fair Oaks Square Office Condominiums.

This project was originally approved by City Council on February 24, 2015 and the BAR on March 16, 2016 (architecture) and September 7, 2016 (hardscape, landscape, and site elements). As part of a concurrent land use case for a General Development Plan amendment, special exceptions, and proffer amendments to the 2015 Council approval, the applicant has returned with revised architectural and

landscape proposals for consideration by the BAR, who must make a final recommendation to City Council on the Major Certificate of Appropriateness.

The BAR held work sessions with the applicant on March 28, 2018 and May 23, 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.
- This development should both fit into the fabric of the City and maintain its own identity.
- Focus on the pedestrian experience within the site.
- Consider employing elevational changes to the ground floor residences to add articulation and to provide privacy.
- The base two stories should be high quality material and articulated to relate to the pedestrian scale; upper stories have more flexibility in materiality.
- There are too many contrasting colors proposed for the bodies of the buildings; a more neutral color palette may be more attractive.
- The different buildings are not cohesive in design. They should either be different enough to give them each a very distinct identity, or similar enough to create a single identity for the development.
- Concern that the removal of balconies, as well as replacement of more textured materials like siding with large cementitious panels causes the buildings to appear very flat.
- Focus on the quality of all facades, but especially those along Fairfax Boulevard and Lee Highway, as these will be the most-seen façades of the project and will help determine whether people want to visit the development.
- Provide perspective renderings with the next round of submissions, so that Board members can accurately perceive the pedestrian experience of the development.
- Without increasing the amount of brick significantly, articulation of the brick itself can improve the perceived quality of the development. Consider techniques such as coursing, patterning, and reliefs.
- It is important that close attention is paid to the design of the streetscape onsite to make sure that it provides a comfortable pedestrian experience.
- The design of the park space in front of Building 400 should be revised to be more user-friendly and attractive

PROPOSAL

Site:

Three buildings are proposed along a gently curving road with wide sidewalks that would cut through the site north to south, creating a connection between Fairfax Boulevard and Lee Highway. Wide sidewalks and landscaping, “linear parks”, are proposed along both Fairfax Boulevard and Lee Highway. Narrower sidewalks are proposed around the rears of the buildings. The buildings are labeled

300, 400, 500, and 600. The buildings labeled 400 and 500 have three footprints on the plan (two for 400, one for 500) which are connected on their upper stories. Two east-west streets would trisect the main road with dead ends, allowing for potential future inter-parcel connections. Building 500 would contain structured parking surrounded by residential uses on all sides. Entrances to the structured parking are proposed on the east-west roads. The site entrance off of Fairfax Boulevard features a landscaped traffic circle with a curved masonry monument sign. Immediately east of this would be a contemplative park space providing a visual connection to the adjoining Jermantown Cemetery, with colored concrete “shards” crisscrossing a concrete paver plaza and landscaped grassy area. Southeast of the traffic circle would be a park space with an oblong-shaped lawn and concrete paver seating area. A plaza is proposed in front of building 500, consisting of a feature tree and planting beds. A landscaped open space and small circular plaza are proposed in front of the west leg of Building 400. A pool and patio amenity space are proposed to the rear of building 300, and a fenced dog park is proposed immediately south of Building 300. Information on landscaping and amenities these spaces can be found in sections below.

Hardscape:

Hardscape 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 Building 400 plaza. Pavers in a random arrangement are proposed in the seating area of the park 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 Building 400 plaza. The pavers come in two color schemes, “Desert Blend” and “Chesapeake Blend”.

Landscape:

Proposed canopy trees include hightower willow oaks with radial iron tree grates 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 the open space in front of 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. Since the May 23 work session, the applicant has amended the landscaping slightly, to increase ground plantings near appurtenances for screening (see below), and most notably within the open space in front of Building 400. Whereas in the previous submission this park area was densely planted with shrubs with little open area or visibility to the plaza, the current submission includes open grass lawn, radial mulch beds that tie into the plaza hardscape, more conservative and manicured shrub

arrangements, and carefully placed ornamental trees. Staff finds the revised design to be more inviting and functional.

The retaining wall proposed along the east property line would be a buff-colored large, split-face block.

Uses:

The BAR's purview does not include the appropriateness of the uses proposed; however the use of the different spaces should have a direct relationship with what the space looks like, which is something on which the BAR should comment. The ground floor uses include residential and amenity in Building 300, residential and office in Building 400, residential and amenity in Building 500, and retail in building 600.

Architecture:

The proposed building height varies, with three stories fronting Lee Highway and Fairfax Boulevard (Buildings 400 and 600), and four and five stories internal to the site. Proposed building forms include large roofline gables with circular louvered vents, projecting window bays, recessed balconies, and storefront window systems and suspended metal canopies over ground floor amenity, retail, and office spaces. Building 600 has the most differentiated design, proposed with a brick warehouse-style section of the building closest to Fairfax Boulevard, incorporating a flat roof, dark accent paneling, and regularly-spaced windows.

The proposed materials include brick in red, beige, and buff. The mortar proposed for the red brick would be dark grey, and the mortar for the beige and buff brick would closely resemble those colors. Masonry is proposed predominantly on the ground level on all sides of the buildings, with the exception of the rear and side elevations of Building 500 which are predominantly cementitious shakes or siding on all levels. In certain areas, including the center part of particularly visible elevations and at corner tower features, brick is proposed up through the second or third floor, and in rare instances up through the fourth floor. Cementitious panels, siding, and shakes would be the primary building materials on upper stories of the buildings and for window bays and gables. Proposed colors include grayish blue, a range of grays and tans, white, and maroon. Metal panel is proposed at ground floor levels of Buildings 500 and 600 between storefront fenestration in colors including grayish blue, forest green, and maroon. Synthetic wood paneling is proposed in these same locations, interspersed with the metal panel. Wall recesses are used in certain areas to break up large expanses of blank wall where internal space that does not require windows are located such as walk-in closets and storage areas. The colors are the same as the 2016 approval, and color placement is very similar.

The major differences between the approved 2016 architecture and currently proposed architecture include (see elevations exhibit in Attachment 2):

- Decrease in the amount of brick, and increase in the amount of cementitious product
- Removal of sections of recessed balconies
- Removal of window bays
- Addition of white cementitious pilaster features beneath gables

- Removal of central entrance at Building 300
- Removal of arched storefront window features
- Removal of largescale masonry block from the archway over the Lee Highway entrance

Major changes made between the most recent work May 23 work session architecture and the currently proposed architecture include (see Attachment 3):

- Simplification of the color scheme of building 300
- Addition of a section of recessed balconies to the north and south elevations of Building 300
- Removal of three sections of recessed balconies from the north elevation of building 500
- Addition of circular louvered gable vents to gables on all building except for 600 (this building does not have roofline gables like the other buildings)
- Replacement of sloped fabric awnings with suspended metal canopies throughout development
- Extension of the warehouse-style brick portion of the building southward on the west elevation of Building 600

The applicant has not shown the connection of buildings 400 and 500 in the elevations.

Lighting:

The City standard acorn light fixture with a fluted metal pole is proposed along the center street and along both Fairfax Boulevard and Lee Highway. Other lighting proposed includes dark bronze metal dome-top bollards by Philips Guardco within open areas and around the paths at the rears of the buildings, and dark bronze shielded metal spotlights by Nuvo in planting beds and in landscaped areas for accent uplighting. See page L6-03 of Attachment 2 for details.

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 would include variety of amenities for residents, including armchairs, tables, deck chairs, tent-like cabanas, a fire pit, and an outdoor kitchen with granite countertops, a sink, and grills. The dog park includes a paved seating area and a decorative trellis in the center. Black metal picket fencing and gates would be used for both the pool and dog park, and balcony railings would be in this same general style. Benches are proposed throughout the development, "Gretchen Bench" by Landscape Forms, a curved wooden bench with black metal legs. They are located along the main north-south roadway, near and within the dog park, and in the Building 400 plaza. The bike racks proposed in front of buildings 400 and 600 would be metal loop racks by Landscape Forms. The same tables and armchairs proposed in the pool area are also proposed in the park southeast of the traffic circle. There is a statue proposed in the Building 400 plaza called "Gravity" by Terra Sculpture. A City standard bus shelter is proposed on Lee Highway. Amenity details can be seen in sheets L6-01 through L7-01 of Attachment 2.

Appurtenances:

HVAC units would be both ground-mounted and roof-mounted in roof wells. The ground-mounted units are proposed mainly along the rear bases of the buildings. Since the May 23 work session, many

HVAC units have been relocated from the ground to roof wells, and the space leftover was redesigned to incorporate shrub plantings for added screening. The transformers are generally located in inconspicuous locations at the rears of the buildings. Two transformers, proposed between buildings 500 and 600 where the east-west road ends, do not have screening interior to the site. At the May 23 work session the applicant explained that required access clearance prevented shrubs from being planted in this area, and that fenced and gated enclosures tend to become trash-collectors and actually draw attention to the units. Waste collection areas would be located within the buildings, so no dumpster enclosures are proposed.

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.

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).

While brick is incorporated into all buildings, the overall amount has been significantly reduced from the 2016 approval. Staff believes that the increased use of masonry on the building elevations, while improving the material aesthetic of the project, would also reduce maintenance needs as the development ages. The use of metal and synthetic wood panels is appropriate as an accent feature at the storefronts.

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 in line with the 2016 architectural approvals.

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 the removal of recessed balconies remains problematic and reduces façade articulation and outdoor activity.

The front (west) elevation of Building 300 has few defining features of a main façade. The centralized elements approved in 2016 have been removed, and the ground floor entrances appear to be service entrances more appropriate for the rear of a building. Additionally, the north elevation of Building 300, while a section of balconies and a bay window have been added since the May 23 work session, this façade is still relatively plain in design and would be very visible from Fairfax Boulevard over the open spaces in the northeast portion of the site. Staff believes revisions are necessary on these two façades prior to Council hearing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff finds the proposal to be generally in conformance with the provisions of the Community Appearance Plan, and therefore recommends that the BAR recommend to City Council approval of the Major Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. Brick shall be incorporated, at a minimum, up through the first floor on all elevations of all buildings.
2. Recessed balconies shall be added to the north elevation of building 500, as depicted in the May 23, 2018 work session submittals received by staff on May 7, 2018.
3. The west elevation of Building 300 shall be redesigned to incorporate a formal front entrance, and added articulation using a combination of window bays, recessed balconies, or courtyards prior to City Council hearing.
4. The north elevation of Building 300 shall be redesigned to add articulation using a combination of window bays, recessed balconies, or increased masonry prior to City Council hearing.
5. The elevations of the connection between Buildings 400 and 500 shall be included in the submission materials for City Council hearing, and their architecture should generally reflect that of both buildings to create seamless transition façades.
6. The proposed construction, materials, and landscaping shall be in general conformance with the review materials received by staff and modified through the date of this meeting, except as further modified by the Board of Architectural Review, the Director of Community Development and Planning, the Building Official, or Zoning as necessary.

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.