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January 5, 2024

Via E-Mail and Hand Delivery

Anna Kohlbrenner
City of Fairfax
Department of Community Development & Planning
10455 Armstrong Street, Suite 207
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Re: Statement of Design Intent for Certificate of Appropriateness Application
4020 University Drive, 4029 Chain Bridge Road & 4031 Chain Bridge Road
(collectively, the "Subject Property")
Project Name: The Ox Fairfax – Block A
Applicant: Ox Hill Realty, LLC

Dear Ms. Kohlbrenner:

On behalf of Ox Hill Realty, LLC (the "Applicant"), please accept this Statement of Design Intent and the enclosed materials as a request for a Major Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the redevelopment of the Property with a mixed-use project consisting of a concert hall, hotel, art galleries, restaurant, retail and office uses. The project is identified as The Ox Fairfax – Block A.

The Subject Property consists of three (3) parcels bounded generally by Chain Bridge Road, Sager Avenue, and University Drive that include approximately 156,376 square feet (approximately 3.589 acres) of site area. The Subject Property is currently developed with three existing office buildings, including the National Bank of Fairfax building (the "Bank") located at the intersection of Chain Bridge Road and Sager Avenue, which was constructed in approximately 1905, and two office buildings that were constructed in approximately 1973 and 1976, respectively. Aside from the three buildings, the majority of the Subject Property is covered by expansive asphalt parking lots, and is sparsely vegetated. Surrounding development includes the Fairfax County Judicial Complex across Chain Bridge Road to the west, and office and other commercial uses to the north, east and south. The Subject Property is located in Old Town Fairfax, and is located near the southern boundary of the the Historic Overlay District (HOD).

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Concurrent with this Certificate of Appropriateness application, the Applicant has submitted rezoning, Special Use Permit (SUP), and special exception applications to allow the proposed development. The rezoning application proposes to rezone the property from the CR – Commercial Retail and HOD Districts to the CU – Commercial Urban and HOD Districts to allow the proposed development. The submitted special exception applications include requests to: 1) increase the maximum permitted building height in the HOD from 36’/3 stories to XXX’/7 stories; 2) waive the requirement to provide vehicular cross-access between the Subject Property and adjacent commercial properties to the south; 3) reduce the parking requirement for the proposed mix of uses; 4) modify the transitional screening requirement between the Subject Property and the adjacent commercial properties to the south; and 5) modify the parking lot landscape requirements for a portion of the existing parking lot on the Subject Property that is to remain as an interim condition. Each of these requests are discussed more fully in the Narrative submitted with the land use applications.

The Applicant’s proposal presents an exciting opportunity to invigorate Old Town through the addition of arts and cultural, hospitality, and retail/restaurant uses, consistent with the vision of the Old Town Fairfax Small Area Plan (SAP). The Applicant has thoughtfully designed the buildings and site design in the context of the City of Fairfax Design Guidelines, seeking to advance the stated goals of the HOD where feasible. The following provides an overview of how the proposed architecture and site design, as further illustrated in the submitted Certificate of Appropriateness materials, advance the goals of the HOD set forth in Section HOD-1.8 of the Design Guidelines:

1. Preservation of Historic Bank Building – The Applicant’s proposal includes the preservation and adaptive reuse of the Bank building, which was constructed in the early 1900’s and is identified as a contributing resource within the City of Fairfax Historic District. The existing Bank building will remain in its entirety, and will be integrated into the proposed concert hall. The new building will tie in to the eastern and southern facades of the Bank, and the interior of the Bank will be renovated and adaptively re-used as a small art gallery. While portions of the proposed buildings will reach up to seven (7) stories on the eastern portion of the Subject property, the buildings will taper down to three (3) stories along Chain Bridge Road and Sager Avenue adjacent to the Bank – thereby respecting the character of the historic structure. The adaptive re-use of the bank building in conjunction with the limitations on the height and massing of adjacent portions of the proposed buildings will ensure that it can continue to contribute to the historic character of the HOD.
2. Building on the Existing Character of the HOD – The Applicant’s proposal will build on the existing character of the HOD by utilizing high quality building materials, and employing a variety of architectural styles and techniques that are compatible with the character of original and recently approved or completed buildings in and around Old Town Fairfax. The proposed building materials include predominantly brick and masonry materials for each of the proposed buildings. The Applicant has employed a variety of brick, stone and other material colors to provide visual interest across each façade, and ensure that the buildings do not achieve a monolithic appearance. Different sections of the buildings employ a variety of architectural styles, fenestration patterns,

and rooflines to further accentuate the appearance of the buildings, while being reflective of the intended purpose of the proposed uses. The high quality materials and design will complement and build upon the character of the HOD and set a new benchmark for quality of design and construction in the City.

3. Establishment of a Street Wall – While not directly located on Main Street, the proposed building has been oriented to establish a street wall along Chain Bridge Road, Sager Avenue and University Drive. In addition, the building will ultimately have frontage on the extension of South Street, once the extension is constructed by the City as currently planned. The perimeter of the building will be wrapped by a ten foot sidewalk, consistent with the HOD guidelines, enhancing the street wall and contributing to the pedestrian experience.
4. Respectful the Boundary Between Commercial Areas and Surrounding Neighborhood – The Subject Property is entirely surrounded by institutional and commercial uses, as noted above.
5. Respectful of Existing Architectural Character – As discussed above, the Applicant has placed an emphasis on high quality brick and masonry materials that have been used elsewhere in and around Old Town Fairfax. While portions of the proposed buildings are taller than existing buildings in the HOD, those portions of the building are located on the eastern side of the Subject Property, which is currently developed with an extant five story office building and across University Drive from two extant six story office buildings. This height tapers down to three stories along Sager Avenue and Chain Bridge Road proximate to the historic Fairfax County Courthouse. Therefore, the Applicant has respected the architectural character of existing buildings in the HOD and the surrounding area.
6. Pedestrian Improvements – The proposed development will result in significant improvements to the streetscape, including the addition of ten foot sidewalks and street trees along the street frontages. The development will also introduce an new and long-desired east-west pedestrian connection through the Subject Property from Chain Bridge Road to University Drive that will provide pedestrian access to the main entrances to the concert hall and hotel buildings. These pedestrian improvements will contribute to the walkability of Old Town.
7. Open Space – While opportunities for open space are somewhat limited given the programmatic needs of the concert hall and hotel operators, the Applicant has identified an opportunity for a new plaza element along Chain Bridge Road. This area, which is property owned by the City, will be improved with a seating area, a new bus shelter, a scooter docking station, and bicycle racks. Additional landscaping is also proposed. Finally, while not part of this application, the Applicant has plans to redevelop adjacent properties to the south, which will present opportunities to provide additional open space in Old Town.

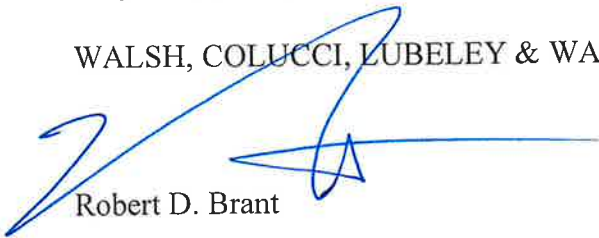
8. Strengthening the Boundaries of the HOD – The Subject Property is located on the southern border of the HOD. The Applicant’s proposal therefore presents an opportunity to signify the entrance to the HOD from points south. The proposal achieves this objective by orienting the primary facades and main entrances of the building to the south, fronting onto the extension of South Street that will ultimately be constructed by the City. These primary facades will serve to welcome vehicles and pedestrians as they travel into Old Town, signifying a sense of arrival.
9. Landscaping – Street trees and landscaping are provided around the perimeter of the Subject Property, and in the interim surface parking lot to remain. While the Applicant ultimately plans to redevelop this interim parking lot, it has placed an emphasis on landscaping in and around the lot until such time as redevelopment commences.
10. Respectful of Street Patterns and Lot Orientation – The Applicant has worked to site and orient the building in a manner that works not only with the existing street patterns in Old Town, but also with the planned extension of South Street. As noted above, the proposed buildings establish a street wall along the existing street frontages of Chain Bridge Road, Sager Avenue and University Drive. In the future, following the construction of the South Street extension, the main entrances to the buildings will front onto South Street. This configuration will ultimately establish a new City block, serving as an extension to the existing grid in Old Town Fairfax. The site design therefore respects the existing (and future) street patterns and lot orientation in the HOD.

For the above reasons, the Applicant’s proposal for Block A advances each of the HOD Goals as described in the Design Guidelines.

Following your review of the submitted Certificate of Appropriateness application materials, I would appreciate the scheduling of a work session with the Board of Architectural Review to discuss this proposal and obtain feedback. Should you have any questions regarding the submitted materials or if I can provide additional information to facilitate your review, please do not hesitate to contact me. As always, I appreciate your assistance.

Very truly yours,

WALSH, COLUCCI, LUBELEY & WALSH, P.C.



Robert D. Brant

Enclosures

cc:	Christopher Smith	Aidan Smith	Madeline Baldwin
	Shelley Kuras	Steve Knight	John Lightle
	Jim Delery	Steve Horwitz	
	Deirdre Smith	Clayton Tock	