

*noted attachments will be added after approval of the draft by the ARB



Minutes
Architectural Review Board
April 10, 2023
Council Chambers

You may view and listen to the Architectural Review Board meeting in its entirety [here](#). The time of each presentation is in brackets below [00:00:00].

Members Present

Karen Irvin (Chair)
Adriana Moss (Vice Chair)
Helen P. Ross
Laura Galke
James Jarrell IV
D.D. Lecky
Kelly Penick (virtual)

Members Absent

Staff

Kate Schwartz
Caroline Hieber

Chair Irvin called the Architectural Review Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS

Chair Irvin determined that a quorum of 7 members was present, and asked if public notice requirements had been met. Ms. Schwartz confirmed that they had.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA [00:02:16]

Ms. Moss made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Ms. Galke seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

ANNOUCEMENTS & REPORTS [00:03:10]

Ms. Schwartz reminded the Board that Chair Irvin will provide an educational presentation on Historic District basics on the May 8, 2023 meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [00:03:40]

Ms. Lecky motioned to approve the January 9, 2023 minutes as written. Ms. Galke seconded. The motion carried 7-0.

DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

None.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

CONSENT AGENDA [00:05:53]

- A. COA FY23-0051 – 415 Wolfe Street – Sign Installation
- B. COA FY23-0052 – 1310 Caroline Street – Minor Alteration
- C. COA FY23-0053 – 600 Caroline Street – Sign Installation
- D. COA FY23-0054 – 620 Caroline Street – Sign Installation

Ms. Lecky motioned to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Ms. Moss seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARING [00:07:43]

Continued Applications

- A. COA FY23-0010 – 301-303 Hanover Street – Kitty Wafle and Jay Holloway request to make alterations including replacing all the windows, demolishing the rear additions at this residential structure, and constructing new rear additions.

Jay Holloway was present to answer questions.

Danae Peckler, from the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. (HFFI), spoke in support of the staff recommendation to continue the application [see public comment attached].

Ms. Schwartz provided a detailed overview of the changes shown in the revised drawings. Mr. Holloway stated that they have greatly reduced the number and size of the windows.

Ms. Moss referred to the revised drawings. Ms. Moss asked what the material will be for the division screen on the balcony patio at the back of the building. Mr. Holloway said it will be stucco or plaster. The materials are not completely finalized and they are not asking for approval of all materials at this time.

Ms. Penick stated that the Board would like the applicant to submit rear elevations of the project. Ms. Penick asked clarifying questions about the roofline of the third story rear addition. There was a discussion on the gable roofline orientation.

Ms. Lecky said that most of her concerns have been addressed and she is willing to support the staff recommendation. Ms. Galke thanked the applicant for providing a detailed information about the intended use of the salvaged brick, and the slate for the roofing. The rear additions were poorly constructed and poorly maintained.

Discussion continued on the roofline. Mr. Holloway and Ms. Stacy Lampman from Spaces Design Studio clarified that the gabled roof was slightly offset and centered between the two doors that walk out onto the back balcony. This is not discernable from the ground. Ms. Ross asked if they had performed a paint analysis on the brick façade. They had not. There was a discussion on the maintenance of painted brick.

Chair Irvin stated that her questions and concerns were addressed by the other Board members. She had no further comments and was ready to support the staff recommendation.

Ms. Moss motioned to approve the demolition of the two rear additions and the site planning, scale, massing, and conceptual elevations of a new rear addition and alterations to the existing structure in accordance with revised plans submitted on April 6, 2023. Ms. Lecky seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

- B. COA FY23-0030 – 400 Princess Anne Street – James Whitman requests approval of the site planning, scale, and massing of five new three-story townhomes to be constructed on the property behind the existing commercial building.

Michael Adams participated virtually and Mr. Whitman was present.

Ms. Schwartz read into the record a comment from Danae Peckler (HFFI) in opposition to the application [see attached].

Ms. Schwartz read into the record a comment from Ms. Lissah Michalski, 316 Frederick Street, in opposition to the application [see attached].

Ms. Schwartz read into the record a comment from Mr. Forrest Wilhoit, 307 Princess Anne Street, in opposition to the application [see attached].

Ms. Schwartz read into the record a comment from Mr. Hamilton Palmer, 401 Charles Street, in opposition to the application [see attached].

Ms. Moss thanked the team for the revised drawings and additional views. Ms. Moss addressed the concerns listed in the public comments such as the building height, roof, and incompatible masonry. Ms. Moss doesn't agree that the "box" presented is three stories and stated that the roof unit makes this a four-story building. Ms. Moss stated that she does not support the top story mechanical structure and argued that the enclosure is not necessary. She asked why the top units' width was inconsistent across units.

Mr. Adams explained that the difference was determined by the unit mass. Ms. Moss asked him to elaborate on the mechanical unit roof slope for A203 to A204. The air handler units stand at about 6-7 feet tall. The mechanical unit height allows room for servicing. Ms. Moss voiced her concerns regarding the unit facing Princess Anne Street. She agreed with the public comment regarding the setback. Mr. Adams explained why the team chose that setback and described the interior of the buildings.

Mr. Jarrell requested elevations of adjacent buildings to compare to the proposed townhomes. He would like to see a comparison of the cornice/eave heights. Mr. Adams stated that it was his understanding that they wanted the elevations of buildings to the right, which they submitted. Mr. Jarrell asked Mr. Adams to explain the setback small hyphen connected to the unit facing Princess Anne Street. Mr. Adams stated that the hyphen will be attached to 400 Princess Anne Street, but is open on the second story to allow for code clearance against the 400 Princess Anne windows.

Ms. Lecky said she was still concerned about the mansard roof and scale and massing. The new mansard roof makes the building look much taller instead of reducing it. Mr. Adams explained that it was designed to hide the mechanical structures. There are two structures on the roof, an indoor unit and the outdoor unit. There were no other alternative placement options. Mr. Adams stated that they considered locating them in the garage but determined that wouldn't be ideal because it would create condensation would lead to mold. He said they can work on an alternate roof design, but that they need to include a parapet for screening.

Ms. Galke appreciated the revised drawings. She did not have any concerns with the mansard roof. She suggested that the design of garage doors should draw inspiration from the surrounding area. Mr. Adams agreed. Ms. Galke was sympathetic to the height complaints from the public and stated that masonry would be ideal for a structure of this height but understands that it is a costlier option.

Ms. Ross was pleased that they presented plans closer to what the Board would consider appropriate for the neighborhood. She referred to sheet 304 which depicted the train station and stated that there is a strong horizontal emphasis in the area. She suggested that the design team could draw inspiration from those elements. She said the four units in the middle of the block have less impact given the proximity to the Purina Tower and the former gas works. She stated that the materials align with what is in the neighborhood, and it's not all brick.

Chair Irvin stated that the team made significant efforts to submit drawings that align with the guidelines in regards to the site plan and the scale and massing. She said they had made efforts to reduce the size, step back upper stories, slope the stair towers. The project broadly complies with the guidelines for site planning, scale, and massing at this stage and the remaining elements can be worked out during the architectural details consideration. She was ready to approve the staff recommendation.

Ms. Galke motioned to approve the site planning, scale, and massing of COA FY23-0030 – 400 Princess Anne Street in accordance with the revised drawings submitted on April 3, 2023 and to continue the consideration of the detailed architectural design elements to a later meeting. Ms. Ross seconded and the motion was opened for discussion. Ms. Penick confirmed that the rooftop access was not a part of the approval. Mr. Jarrell and Ms. Penick raised concerns about whether the infill unit should be reviewed as an addition to the 400 Princess Anne Street building rather than new construction. The motion failed on a 3-4 vote, with Ms. Penick, Ms. Moss, Mr. Jarrell, and Ms. Lecky against.

Ms. Schwartz stated that the Board will need to make a new motion and stated the board should be specific with their requests from the applicant.

Ms. Moss motioned to continue the application so the Board can consider additional drawings of unit one and the block face, the elimination of the mansard roof entirely, and the consideration of elimination of the fourth story entirely. Mr. Jarrell seconded the motion and it was opened for discussion.

Ms. Lecky stated that she supported the scale and massing of the four townhouses but not the unit facing Princess Anne Street. She requested that they make a motion that will separate that infill unit from the motion. Mr. Jarrell and Ms. Penick both agreed. Ms. Moss withdrew her motion.

Ms. Lecky motioned to approve the site planning, scale, and massing of the four townhouses oriented toward Frederick Street (units two through five) and continue the consideration of unit one to the next regular meeting. Ms. Moss seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

New Applications

- C. COA FY23-0049 – 1311 Caroline Street – Steve D'Lugos requests to replace nine wood windows at this single-family residence with solid wood replacement units.

Mr. D'Lugos was present.

Ms. Schwartz read into the record a comment from Ms. Peckler, on behalf of HFFI, who expressed support of the staff recommendation.

The Board members each stated that they were not in support of the application because there is not enough damage to the windows to justify replacement. The Board recommended that the windows should be repaired and provided advice to the applicant.

Ms. Lecky motioned to deny the application. Ms. Galke seconded the motion. Ms. Schwartz suggested that the motion should be amended to include the reason why the motion was denied.

Ms. Lecky accepted the suggestion and restated the motion to include that the application fails to meet the standards in City Code Section 72-23.1 (D)2, especially standard 6. Ms. Galke seconded. The motion carried 7-0.

- D. COA FY23-0050 – 503 Sophia Street – Todd Sullivan requests approval of a modified design for the rear patio roof covering at Brock’s restaurant.

Todd Sullivan was present to answer questions and provided a description of the work that was completed and elaborated on the design changes. He said the truss design changed to keep the new roof below the trim of the garage.

Ms. Schwartz read into the record a comment from Danae Peckler, on behalf of HFFI, in opposition to the application [see attached].

Ms. Moss was not opposed to the new design of the roof, but expressed concerns regarding the protruding roofline that obscures the view of the window, shown on slide 34 of the presentation. Mr. Sullivan explained why the truss was located there and said they sloped that portion of the roof to prevent the collection of water. Ms. Moss agreed with the staff recommendation that an alternate to the polycarbonate panels needed to be used there.

Mr. Jarrell asked if there was a window installed in the rear patio that was previously approved. Mr. Sullivan said that was a retractable partition made of a clear plastic. The timber work behind it is painted wood. Mr. Sullivan said that they were 8x8 in the field. Mr. Jarrell and Chair Irvin stated the original plans from November 4, 2022 depict 6x6, not 8x8.

Mr. Jarrell asked why the team diverted from the approved plans in the field during construction. Mr. Sullivan explained that there is a slope in the existing floor area, so they had to set the posts before they could have the trusses designed. Mr. Jarrell asked if they could not have lowered the beam that carries the truss. Mr. Sullivan said that they couldn’t because of the existing bar inside the structure.

Mr. Jarrell said that the use of polycarbonate material was only approved because the plans showed that they would be used in moderation and would have minimal visibility. The existing conditions show that the materials are not being used in moderation and they are highly visible which does not comply with the guidelines. Mr. Jarrell asked if they could remove the vertical polycarbonate. Mr. Sullivan confirmed that they can use a different material.

Ms. Penick asked if they could provide new drawings at the next scheduled meeting. These should include the alternate fascia, and details on the roof changes and the valet booth/hostess stand in the front. There appears to be a new roof on the back side of the building. Mr. Sullivan said that roof and the hostess stand are outside the scope of their work and that they believe it was completed by another contractor. The property owner will need to come speak on that project.

Ms. Lecky stated that she was concerned about the vertical plastic being used as a screen when it was previously approved only because of the low visibility. The Board is unlikely to approve this material in this use. Ms. Lecky said that the Board would have approved an alternative roofline or height had they presented it to the Board prior to construction.

Ms. Galke said she was more concerned with the unapproved field changes than the roof design. She said she was concerned with the polycarbonate fascia and the modified roof design is more complex than is characteristic of the historic structure it adjoins. She agreed with the staff recommendation to continue the application as more information was needed and alternate materials would need to be presented. Mr. Sullivan asked what materials would be appropriate. Ms. Lecky recommended metal, wood, or glass. Plastic is discouraged.

Chair Irvin requested exact drawings in order for the Board to provide accurate feedback. Chair Irvin stated that the roof is obscuring the windows which the Board made very clear they did not approve of. Chair Irvin agreed with the staff recommendation.

Ms. Moss motioned to continue COA FY23-0050 – 503 Sophia Street to the May 8, 2023 meeting to give the Board time to consider the revised drawings and for the applicant to provide updated information the Board requested. This includes the updated truss system, alternative options for the polycarbonate materials that is acting as a fascia, and the new attendant stand. Ms. Ross seconded. The motion was opened for discussion. Mr. Jarrell requested that the applicant must submit materials that detail all the changes made on the site no matter which contractor completed the work. The motion carried 7-0.

- E. COA FY22-0029 – 450 Lafayette Boulevard – Paul Janney requests approval of the detailed architectural design of a new three-story multi-family residential building on a portion of this parcel adjacent to the Colonial Tavern restaurant.

J. Brown was present to answer questions and agreed with the staff recommendation. He gave a brief description on the revised drawings and provided drawings to show updated window trim details.

Ms. Schwartz read into the record a comment submitted from Ms. Peckler (HFFI) who agreed with the staff recommendation.

Ms. Moss thanked Mr. Brown for the revised application and said she was in support of the brick cornice and the elimination of the guttering as presented. In regard to the window options, Ms. Moss said option A was more appropriate. She agreed with the staff recommendation to construct a full sill with a solid course on top. This is more appropriate than picture-framed trim.

Mr. Jarrell also supported option A. Mr. Jarrell asked if the proposed brick will be tumbled or distressed. The brick will be standard size red brick, and not molded or distressed. Ms. Penick agreed and said her comments have been addressed.

Ms. Lecky agreed with the staff recommendation and option A for the windows. Ms. Galke thanked the applicant for their revised drawings. She was concerned about the roof HVAC visibility. Mr. Brown said they will be hidden by raised portions of the building. Ms. Galke agreed with the staff recommendations and expressed support of the application.

Ms. Ross agreed with the comments from the Board and the staff recommendation. Ms. Ross also supported option A for the brick mold and full sill. Chair Irvin stated that she supported the proposed detailing for the brick cornice and stated option A is far more appropriate than option B for the window.

Ms. Ross motioned to approve the detailed architectural design of COA FY22-0029 – 450 Lafayette Boulevard in accordance with the staff recommendations 1-4 in the staff report and in accordance with the revised elevation as presented. Ms. Moss seconded.

Ms. Schwartz suggested that the motion should include the front elevation as presented tonight with the modified cornice. Ms. Ross amended her motion to specify that it was for approval in accordance with the elevations as presented, with window detail option A, and with the conditions:

1. Revise window detailing to include a full sill rather than picture-framed trim. Cast stone sills may be appropriate for use.
2. Windows and doors must be simulated divided light units with spacers between the glass panes.
3. Half-round gutters and round downspouts should be used.
4. Confirm the location of mechanical equipment and ensure that it is fully screened.

Ms. Moss seconded the amended motion. The motion carried 6-0 with Ms. Penick abstaining due to technical difficulties.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

STAFF UPDATE [\[02:34:44\]](#)

M. Schwartz reminded the Board that the CLG Workshop registration link was emailed to the Board and they should sign up as soon as possible due to limited seats. Ms. Schwartz also noted that she had submitted this year's CLG grant application for a feasibility study for the original 1935 Walker Grant School. Grants will be awarded in late May.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Irvin adjourned the meeting at 9:35 p.m.



Karen Irvin, Chair

**Hamilton Palmer
401 Charles Street
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
email: hpalmer@hgp.biz**

April 6, 2023

To: Chair and Members of the City of Fredericksburg Architectural Review Board
Fr: Hamilton Palmer, adjacent property owner

Re: 400 Princess Anne Street and public hearing

Madam Chair and Members,

Thank you for your concern with the proposed development at 400 Princess Anne. Some members raised questions about the height of the proposed development and the applicant indicated he needed the extra height and roof access to provide open space and that balconies were not an option. A review of the recording of the March 13th ARB meeting indicates your concerns were valid.

Also, this Public Hearing and Applicants responses points out why ARB Site Planning, Massing and Scale should be done concurrently with the other approvals. Most all of the applicants comments and reasoning for the 4th floor (3rd floor with a box on top) is predicated on him having to provide a fire apparatus access road to the rear of his parking lot. Saying the fire official is requiring this may be misinformation and is a reason why this review needs be done in tandem with other departments and their reviews.

The below information is germane to this issue, and I think you should read to understand this neighbors viewpoint. Following is taken from the Public Hearing (not quotes unless quotation marks and *italics*) with approximate time stamp (33:22) in the recording indicate the following:

39:30 When discussing height of the Mechanical Room question, the Applicant (MA) said ‘the reason for such large is because no outdoor space and because we don’t have room to put porches or balconies. It (stairwell and mechanical room) gives them the option, not the option but necessity of having access to service the HVAC unit.

If you look at the last page, it shows 34’ parapet height. The roof height is below that. If you compare that to everything we just built, it is lower.

Fact check: if there is no parapet and no mechanical room (no 4th story or >30’), then no aerial fire apparatus access required and you likely can install balconies. Subject to Site Plan review by Fire Department.

43:43 MA – “*townhouses that we build literally across the street are taller than this. Great. pretty much everything around it is taller than us*”. You have to be a few blocks away to even see it (4th floor walkout).

Fact check: MA did not build townhomes literally across the street. You do not have to be a few blocks away to see ‘it’ (See attached profiles.). And, 400, 404, 406 (all contiguous) are lower.

45:30 ARB member- No outdoor space - I recall the Loft balconies.

MA –“that alley at 20' is required to be completely free of anything so a ladder truck can access the buildings to fight fire”.. We've already done the analysis with the ladder trucks the city sent us to make sure we meet the minimum requirement. No way you can put balconies back there.

Fact check: Fire Apparatus Access Road generally not required for 3 story townhomes within 150' of fire apparatus access road (Frederick Street) subject to Site Plan approval. And, aerial fire apparatus access roads for townhomes >30' are required to be 26' wide and not 20'..IFC Section D105 or as modified by the Fire Official – in this case 24' wide..

49:30 ARB member: structure is massive, can roof access be smaller?

MA - from street not going to see. From a few blocks away, really from anywhere within a block of this you would never ever see it. It is just not going to be possible. We are below the guidelines. The building we built across the street, we are way below all of that and for the main structure, we are way below everything.

Fact check: MA is not 'way below everything' and not 'way below the guidelines; Not even close, he is not even below the adjacent buildings at 400, 404, 406 Princess Anne and 311 Frederick Street.

53:00 MA - have to have flat roof because only area to offer outdoor space to residents

ARB member: are the bump outs part of the massing or part of details.

Staff- part of the details. You would be approving essentially a box.

ARB to MA: would you consider removing the bump?

MA the box on the roof is actually the indoor air handler and hot water heater and the outside is the outdoor unit.

Fact check: the box on the roof is just that box. One member indicated that drawings can be misleading and maybe staff were misled about the size of these boxes. The (approximate dimensions) 'box' on Unit 1 is 15' x 18' and Unit 2 and 3 are 16' x 10' and Units 4 and 5 are 13'x13'. The boxes are not required for the outdoor HVAC equipment. This is not just one box but several boxes above the third story. Are these boxes part of the massing and scale of the building?

MA: This is a multi-stage process. First the box, then the PC for site plan approval and then City Council.

Fact: he is correct. However, because the applicant needs variances and special use permits, it is important this be done in conjunction with ARB to address site planning, safety, density, trees, parking, and subdivision and more specifically, the fire code requirements..

End of fact checking the Public Hearing – begin general comment.

It appears that if the 'box' on the roof is not there, then the three story townhomes would not need an aerial fire apparatus access road and could install balconies.

Other comments during the public hearing: when one member asked about the bump out on the unit next to the coffee shop and why they could not put it (hvac) between the two buildings, the applicant said that the hvac next to the building was a fire hazard and he did not want the adjacent building to catch fire. However, there is a hvac unit in that same space.

Attached is a profile showing Units 1 and 2 based on the limited information provided in the application. Both profiles indicate that you would be able to see the 'boxes' from the street

I am also concerned the Applicant has not addressed:

- Parking (5. Site Elements F. *"the location of parking is considered a component of overall site planning"*)
- Trees: UDO 72-23.1 *"shall consider the existence of trees and other landscaping, and the extent of paving."*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hamilton Palmer".

Hamilton Palmer
Next door neighbor



10 April 2023

To: Kate S. Schwartz

ksschwartz@fredericksburgva.gov

cc: Planning@fredericksburgva.gov

The Historic Fredericksburg Foundation has reviewed the upcoming agenda and related COA documents for the April 10, 2023 meeting of the Architectural Review Board and submits the following comments on select projects.

Public Hearing:

COA FY23-0010 – 301-303 Hanover Street

HFFI supports staff's recommendation to continue this application to the May 8th meeting as this COA has many components. The design of proposed new construction is much improved from the previous iteration, but feels that it continues to contrast somewhat sharply with the architectural composition of the original and existing building, particularly at the west elevation.

COA FY23-0030 – 400 Princess Anne Street

This application has changed substantially since it was initially introduced and HFFI appreciates how the alterations have enhanced the residential character of the proposed design. The inclusion of measurements and prospective views of the new design in context with surrounding historic resources is also a great improvement upon the previous application(s).

Both buildings proposed by this new construction are taller than most surrounding resources, and HFFI feels that continued modifications could reduce the height and improve the contextual appearance of this infill project. Floor heights in the surrounding historic neighborhood are generally much less than 11 feet tall; thus, it remains unclear how the vertical elements of the new design relate to the rooflines, cornices, fenestration, and façade features of adjacent contributing resources.

Newly submitted information suggests that the 4th floor is less visible from the street around the larger of the two newly proposed buildings, but it remains a conspicuous feature of the smaller unit that faces Princess Anne Street. HFFI continues to believe that these vertical massings are not in keeping with design guidelines, which require additional stories to be **“stepped back so it is not visible from adjacent streets”** (9.C.2.). Furthermore, it is important to note that rooftop porches have no precedence in this neighborhood. Many apartments, condos, and rental residences in town DO NOT have allocated private outdoor space, let alone space on the top of their roofs. When introducing such a new and contemporary feature in a historic setting, it is all the more important to ensure its elements are minimally intrusive to the streetscape.

COA FY23-0049 – 1311 Caroline Street

HFFI concurs with staff recommendations to deny this COA to replace wood windows at 1311 Caroline. We'd also encourage the applicant to conduct additional research online regarding ways to repair and maintain historic wood windows while simultaneously achieving greater energy efficiency and operability, and ask that they reach out to office@hffi.org for additional assistance, if needed.

COA FY23-0050 – 503 Sophia Street

HFFI has repeatedly provided comments on the ever-expanding patio structure at Brock's restaurant over the past year and are saddened to see that the current design introduces unwanted architectural elements that were discussed – at some length at previous ARB meetings. While several different architectural features are out of step with what was approved by the ARB, HFFI is particularly concerned with the plastic sheeting that hangs down from the cornice of the structure and the current roof design that shows the plastic roofing material.

COA FY22-0029 – 450 Lafayette Boulevard

The design presented for the proposed new construction on Lafayette between the 1.5-story depot that is now Colonial Tavern and the two-story office building at the edge of the district contrasts with that of other new infill projects in the same vicinity. HFFI appreciates revisions made to this design and finds its three-story height, scale, and massing to be relatively compatible with neighboring historic resources and the general industrial-commercial character of the surrounding area.

10 April 2023

Fredericksburg Architectural Review Board
601 Caroline Street, 4th Floor
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Re: COA FY23-0030 – 400 Princess Anne Street

Dear Architectural Review Board,

My name is Lissah Michalski and I reside at 316 Frederick Street, a roughly 200 year old historic two story “slave jailhouse” situated across the street from the proposed development.

300 Block of Frederick Street - the “Brick Block”

The homes will be placed on what we know as the brick block near the sites of two historic brickyards, including that of George Aler, who built my home and many other dwellings in our town.

The handbook indicates that materials used in new construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the surrounding neighborhood. Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted. On page 103 of the ARB handbook there is a picture of the coffee roaster, which is brick. I believe that this newbuilding should also be a brick structure.

Height

Building height at the street front should be compatible with the heights of surrounding buildings. The proposed development is too tall, far overshadowing the two story homes that comprise most of the rest of the neighborhood. My house at 316 Charles - the only home on the block - is conspicuously absent from the scale drawings submitted by the applicant. Furthermore, it is my understanding that an *exception* was granted to the Lofts; including them in the height comparison doesn't provide that important piece of context.

The building height should relate to the average height of existing adjacent structures: two stories. Resident outdoor access on a proposed outdoor roof-level patio can be eliminated, with individual porches (similar to those included in the Lofts design) positioned on the east-facing rear of the building. Hook and ladder fire trucks have a fire lane access on the street front, as do the lofts.

Roof pitch

The FXBG website states new buildings are integrated into their historic setting and alterations, and must always respect Fredericksburg's historic character. The approval by the ARB would contradict that guideline: roof pitch of new houses should reflect the steeper pitch of older

dwellings. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be located as discreetly as possible to limit visibility. By allowing these homes with mansard roof, in a residential area with dominant visually featured double wide parking garages placed in our historic district the ARB would not be ensuring that development reflects our community's values.

Setback

The proposed homes do not have a setback, which violates city code of ordinance 72-52.2 A, 1, *Location: Vehicles can enter and exit from a lot without posing any substantial danger to themselves, pedestrians, or vehicles traveling on abutting streets.* The Lofts were built in this same manner. To this day, motorists cannot see without braking past the stop sign in the middle of the sidewalk. I have nearly been struck by motorists emerging from these parking areas countless times while walking to and from my home, and I have witnessed others - pets included - nearly missed. Every Wednesday morning - usually at rush hour - a large dumpster truck pulls into the Loft parking area for trash service and then proceeds to back out into Frederick Street. This hazardous maneuver - made necessary by the site design - puts even more cars and pedestrians in danger. If this project is allowed to be built in the same manner, there will no doubt be accidents, injuries, or possibly worse. A larger setback for this project is needed - if not simply to protect citizens, then also to meet code requirements.

Right-of-Way

Code 72.513,D. Right-of-way lines. Right-of-way lines that form the property lines of lots shall be parallel to the street center line. This is not the case with this new construction.

Parking

Parking is a tremendous and growing issue in the neighborhood. Frederick Street allows parking only on one side of the street for its entire length, seven spaces in total on this particular block. New city parking restrictions limit visitors to park only on the named street of the resident host. The new development alone requires space for up to twenty cars, ten visitors, and eliminates parking for a restaurant. Count in the three rental units puts us closer to thirty vehicles and zero restaurant parking. Again, the block has *only seven spaces on the street.*

Finally, the proposed development also removes two large healthy trees from the dividing property line and will block the admired view of the train station my neighbors and I have grown to love. They do not resemble any historic home in the surrounding area and should not be allowed due to historic height, mass and scale requirements, out of character facade, parking and quite frankly, safety. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lissah Michalski
316 Frederick Street

10 April 2023

Fredericksburg Architectural Review Board
601 Caroline Street, 4th Floor
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Re: COA FY23-0030 – 400 Princess Anne Street

Dear ARB Members:

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the ARB for its diligence in helping to ensure that this proceeding moves forward with the level of scrutiny that is necessary for such a complex and important project. Similarly, I appreciate the applicant's continued responsiveness and progress made to date through the submitted revisions. As has been noted in prior meetings, we're moving in the right direction. That said, I believe we still need to further refine the concept and to push ourselves to more carefully consider the impacts that decisions made in this phase of the discussion will have in subsequent proceedings. It is essential to consider the influence of precedent.

On that note, I begin by observing that The Lofts on Charles Street are commonly cited as a reference point in this discussion. That's appropriate for several reasons, and I think that there's an opportunity to learn from that project and to apply those lessons here. I moved to this neighborhood too late to participate in the planning meetings related to that project, but I did see that project come into being from my front windows.

As is so often the case for development projects in locations with an extremely strong existing sense of place, change has been accepted warily. There's clearly plenty here to celebrate: the project has brought new life and energy to the block, has notably preserved and even highlighted historic features, and has very admirably incorporated a masonry exterior, thereby advancing a coherent brick aesthetic on the block. This is laudable, especially given the fact that historic brickyards were located nearby during the Civil War era and were important strategic locations during the battle itself. On the other hand, I still remain perplexed at the new norm of size and scale that is suggested by the Lofts complex itself - and what it portends for the future.

That norm, if extended through the current 400 Princess Anne design, would dramatically change the character and feel of this very special neighborhood. I was saddened to see my own upstairs view of Marye's Heights obscured not only by the Lofts' third floor, but also by the mechanical access and large HVAC units on top of that. Loss of that sightline cut off one of the last remaining visual links between the Lower Caroline neighborhood and Marye's Heights, a key avenue of the Federal approach in December 1862. I realize that such a concern may seem quixotic to some, but I think that it's particularly important in a place where awareness of history is paramount. Perhaps more practically, my neighbors on the west side of Princess Anne, who, despite expressing serious concerns at the time, now literally live in the shadow of a new,

exceptionally large and tall building. These neighbors; homes - some of Fredericksburg's most historic structures were dwarfed. These neighbors, some of whom have lived in and cared for these homes for decades, literally lost their views of the setting sun itself.

While I urge the stakeholders of the 400 Princess Anne project to build on the aesthetic features of the Lofts project going forward - especially to incorporate masonry design elements on the building exterior, I remain unconvinced that the inclusion of a “de facto” fourth floor is appropriate, especially in relation to other structures in the neighborhood. In their comparison figure on Sheet A307, the applicant demonstrates that the aggregate height of the proposed structure (including rooftop structures) will exceed every building of historic value in the neighborhood except the Purina Tower itself. A new 41-foot-tall building will rival the enormity of the Lofts and create a “big three” effect, a block in which the three tallest buildings will be those most recently constructed. Even with necessary masonry exterior, it’s a trend that is incompatible in context. This “race to the clouds: would imperil the character of the neighborhood, once again placing relatively stark, utilitarian elements such as HVAC units and access doors prominently in the neighborhood skyline. Simply put, this pattern should be explicitly avoided with a strict “three story” maximum.

While the question of cars and parking has been mentioned by others in this proceeding, the imperative of providing sufficient space for parking in the new project must be very carefully balanced with the danger of this block being diminished by the near-ubiquitous visual presence of garage doors. The ARB Guidelines indicate that, “parking should be provided in a way that reinforces the existing rhythm and visual aspects of a neighborhood rather than being an obtrusive and incompatible break in the streetscape.” The proposed orientation of the garage openings makes them an overly prominent feature of the 300 Block of Charles. Coexistence between pedestrians and automobiles in the neighborhood is already currently very precarious, and further reinforcing the primacy of cars through the proposed architectural design threatens to tip that balance away from the walkable downtown concept - and more towards the type of suburban car-centric paradigm that downtown denizens often seek to escape.

Finally, the proposed mansard roof design does not appropriately complement the roof shapes seen not only in neighboring structures, but in the downtown district writ large. While a pitched design, possibly incorporating dormers, would be more in line with the aesthetic of the Lower Caroline neighborhood, even a parapet design like that seen in the Lofts would be an improvement and would provide sufficient visual consistency to the block.

As always, I appreciate the opportunity to submit comments and to participate in this process. I am optimistic that a design that meets the expectations of all stakeholders can be found through dialogue, and I look forward to future iterations of this plan and next steps in the review process.

Forrest Wilhoit
307 Princess Anne Street