

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



Minutes
Architectural Review Board
May 8, 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

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 [00:01:20]

Ms. Lecky motioned to remove COA FY23-0064 – 1015 Prince Edward Street from the Consent Agenda and add it to the public hearing agenda for discussion. Ms. Moss made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Ms. Lecky seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & REPORTS [00:02:54]

Chair Irvin's educational presentation on Historic District Basics was deferred to the June 12, 2023 meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [00:04:14]

Ms. Moss motioned to approve the February 13, 2023 minutes as written. Ms. Galke seconded. The motion carried 7-0.

Ms. Moss motioned to approve the February 27, 2023 minutes as written. Ms. Galke seconded. The motion carried 7-0.

Ms. Ross noted an error in the March 2, 2023 Draft Minutes. She was not present for the meeting and was not the Vice Chair at the time.

Ms. Lecky motioned to approve the March 2, 2023 minutes as amended. Ms. Moss seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

Staff confirmed that written public comments will be attached the approved minutes when they are uploaded onto the website.

DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

None.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST [00:08:26]

Mr. Jarrell disclosed a conflict of interest for COA FY23 – 0056 and COA FY23 – 0062 due to ownership. He submitted the appropriate paperwork to Ms. Schwartz.

CONSENT AGENDA [00:09:12]

- A. ~~COA FY23-0058 – 1025 Caroline Street – Sign Installation~~
- B. COA FY23-0059 – 314 Frederick Street – Fence Installation
- C. COA FY23-0061 – 307 Princess Anne Street – Gutter Installation
- D. ~~COA FY23-0064 – 1015 Prince Edward Street – Split AC Unit Installation~~
- E. COA FY23-0065 – 1110 Caroline Street – Sign Installation

COA FY23-0058 – 1025 Caroline Street and COA FY23-0064 – 1015 Prince Edward Street were removed from the Consent Agenda for Board discussion.

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

PUBLIC HEARING [00:14:03]

Applications Removed from the Consent Agenda

- A. COA FY23-0058 – 1025 Caroline Street – Sign Installation

The applicant was not present.

Danae Peckler, from the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. (HFFI), stated concerns with the application [see public comment attached]. She recommended attaching through an existing hole in the building to avoid further damage.

Ms. Ross agreed with Ms. Peckler’s concerns and suggested that a sign could be installed by utilizing the existing flagstaff bracket still in situ as part of the wood frame near the transom. Ms. Galke agreed and stated that the mortar joints are very thin. Ms. Lecky agreed that the applicant should utilize the existing damage to the building to install the sign. The rest of the Board agreed.

Ms. Lecky made a motion to approve the application on condition that the applicant must either utilize the existing holes in the façade or utilize the wooden window frame which would be more easily repairable than damaging the existing brick and mortar joints further. Ms. Galke seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

- B. COA FY23-0064 – 1015 Prince Edward Street – Split AC Unit Installation

The applicant was not present.

Danae Peckler (HFFI), spoke in opposition to the application [see public comment attached], voicing concerns about insufficient screening, the location, and penetration of the building wall.

Hamilton Palmer, 401 Charles Street, spoke in support of this application stating that it will have a minimal impact on the historic nature of the property and it will be appropriately screened.

Ms. Ross shared her experience using a split AC unit in her historic home. She stated that this is a minimally destructive solution that provides comfort to the occupants. Ms. Galke agreed with the staff recommendation.

Ms. Lecky shared HFFI's concerns regarding the penetration points and the drawing do not indicate the presence of a pad. She also voiced placement concerns and requested additional information before granting approval. Ms. Penick agreed with the comments from HFFI and requested additional information stating that the plans do not indicate whether the indoor unit is floor-mounted or wall-mounted which would determine the location of the line set and disconnect. Ms. Penick suggested that the applicant could explore the possibility of locating the unit next to the outdoor gas meter and screening both of those systems.

Mr. Jarrell's comments were already addressed by the Board. Ms. Moss agreed with Ms. Penick and Ms. Lecky's comments and requested additional information.

Ms. Lecky motioned to continue the application to the June 12, 2023 meeting to allow the applicant to submit additional documentation to the Board. Ms. Moss seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

Continued Applications

- A. 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.

James Whitman was present to participate in discussion.

Danae Peckler, from the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. (HFFI), spoke in opposition to the application [see public comment attached].

Hamilton Palmer, 401 Charles Street, requested that the Board address previous public comments and concerns. He voiced that the application contains misinformation and does not include plans for the trees on the property. He stated that sheet A307 is misleading because it does not depict directly adjacent buildings.

Forrest Wilhoit, 307 Princess Anne Street, spoke in opposition to the application stating that the separation of the infill unit from the motion on the April 10, 2023 meeting was an oversight on the Board's behalf and very confusing for the public given that there are not draft minutes available. Mr. Wilhoit stated that the proposed units do not comply with the height guidelines. The units are compared to a small subset of much larger buildings in the vicinity which presents a skewed and distorted picture.

Lissah Michalski, 316 Frederick Street, spoke in opposition to the application. She reiterated her previous submitted comments including limited parking, neighborhood growth, height requirements, and public safety.

Ms. Ross thanked everyone for participating and explained that the Board approved the site plan, scale, and massing of the four units in the previous meeting. The Board had some remaining concerns regarding the infill unit which is under consideration tonight. She stated that the materials provided show enough detail for her to support the application at this point.

Ms. Galke stated that she is still concerned about some of the detailed elements, including the mansard style roof, which contrasts with the style of the neighborhood. She also voiced concerns regarding the height and rooftop of the infill unit.

Ms. Lecky also voiced her concerns with the infill unit height and scale. Ms. Lecky stated that the motion should be clear that the rooftop mechanical unit is not included in the building scale and massing and is open for further consideration. Ms. Lecky provided clarity on her previous motion and the rationale behind it. The board separated the infill unit from the motion because they had some concerns. There was some indication by the applicant during the discussion process that indicated that the unit was to be treated as an addition because it was attached to the other building next door. This concerned the Board because they were not approaching this item as an addition in their review and they did not feel comfortable moving forward with that component of the project without further deliberation. Ms. Lecky also stated for the record that the rooftop access units were still under review, and were not included in the motion.

Ms. Penick asked if this application was presented to the Technical Review Committee (TRC). Ms. Schwartz explained the City's review process. There are two public hearings required for a project of this scale to be approved by the ARB. The first is the site planning, scale, and massing and the second is the detailed architectural design. The ARB approval of site planning, scale, and massing does not equate to Major Site Plan approval with the City. The TRC includes representatives from Planning Services, the Building Department, Public Works, the Fire Marshall, Economic Development, and Stormwater. Once the ARB approves the site planning, scale, and massing, the applicant must then work toward the required legislative and technical approvals before returning to the ARB with the detailed design.

Ms. Penick asked if there was a way that the Fire Marshall could formally confirm that balconies for this project are not feasible. Ms. Schwartz confirmed that this has already been reviewed and that balconies overhanging the access lane will not be allowed. Discussion followed on whether the buildings would have sprinklers and if the building could be used for commercial uses in the future. The applicant said no to both.

Mr. Jarrell stated that he requested elevations of the immediate adjacent buildings to the proposed units several times and the applicant has failed to comply. He once again requested elevations of the streetscape where the historic buildings are so the Board can compare the eave height and the cornice heights. The applicant stated that they misunderstood the request and will include those elevations for consideration in the next meeting.

Ms. Moss agreed with the building height concerns and suggested a reduction in story height so that the cornice heights align. She agreed with Mr. Jarrell's request for additional elevations. Ms. Moss stated that the mechanical access on the top of the building does not comply with the story height standards listed in the guidelines.

Chair Irvin stated that she believes that the site planning, scale and massing comply with the guidelines and that the roof top mechanical unit is not an additional story. In zoning codes, these units are typically

considered appurtenances to a roof. However, additional drawings are required prior to a decision from the Board. The application is open for refinement. Ms. Lecky suggested a motion to continue the application.

Ms. Penick motioned to continue the application to the June 12, 2023 hearing to allow the applicant to submit additional diagrams or sections showing adjacent structures and their heights including dimensions and eave heights. Ms. Moss seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

B. COA FY23-0032 – 905 Princess Anne Street – Laurel Loch on behalf of St. George’s Episcopal Church requests approval of exterior alterations and additions including the construction of an accessible entry ramp and alteration to the narthex, alteration of an entrance to McGuire Hall to accommodate a new interior elevator, and an addition to McGuire Hall within the cemetery courtyard.

The representative, Rector Joe Hensley, 801 Mortimer Avenue, was present to participate in discussion.

Danae Peckler, from the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. (HFFI), spoke on the application voicing support for the ramp, but not the McGuire Hall addition [see public comment attached].

Ms. Ross was appreciative of the memo the church submitted, which helped explain the programmatic needs and complex nature of the site. Ms. Ross said this was the most thoughtful approach and voiced her support of the staff recommendation.

Ms. Galke said she was excited for the increased accessibility. She reiterated that there is a potential for encountering intact occupation layers and the cemetery may have contact or pre-contact Indigenous layers and encouraged the applicant to be mindful during archaeological study and construction. She expressed support of the staff recommendation.

Ms. Lecky voiced her support of the application and thanked the applicant for the clarifying memo.

Ms. Penick expressed that she is not comfortable with granting an approval at this time. She still has some concerns regarding the defined limits of disturbance. The work area will likely be much larger than shown on the plans and it is a narrow space. The cemetery is one of Fredericksburg’s oldest historic structures and its preservation should be a priority.

Mr. Jarrell stated that the applicant submitted a great response letter which helped clarify several concerns. He agreed with Ms. Penick’s comments and concerns. The construction plans don’t seem practical and the work will significantly impact the important viewshed from Princess Anne Street and the adjacent sidewalk.

Ms. Moss thanked the team for their collaboration and said was prepared to support the ramp. Ms. Moss asked them to clarify further on “shafts to be examined” as shown on page three of the plans and how the construction will impact those shafts. Regarding the addition, Ms. Moss supported the HFFI’s solution of utilizing an alternative building.

Chair Irvin stated that this application was a thoughtful solution that provides accessibility. The ramp and addition comply with the guidelines and she is ready to support approval.

Ms. Lecky motioned to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Ross seconded the motion.

Ms. Ross was curious about the window removal portion of the application and requested more details. Mr. Hensley stated that the window would be carefully removed and mounted on the interior of the narthex. All the work will be repairable should someone wish to reinstall the windows in the future.

The motion carried 4-3, with Ms. Moss, Mr. Jarrell, and Ms. Penick against.

C. 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 participate in discussion.

Danae Peckler, from the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. (HFFI), spoke in opposition to the application [see public comment attached].

Ms. Ross expressed her disappointment and stated that the applicants had every opportunity to make corrections prior to construction. They are not meeting or even looking at the guidelines. The original plans that the Board approved were very open and it is now an enclosed space. Ms. Ross said that the inappropriate work should be removed.

Ms. Galke was concerned with the highly visible use of polycarbonate. It’s becoming an enclosed space when it should not be. It is unclear which plans are existing and what is proposed and more information will be needed.

Ms. Lecky explained that polycarbonate is generally not permitted unless it has a limited use with minimal visibility. That is why the Board approved the previous roof pitch. If the applicant preferred a different roof design, the Board would have requested an alternative material. Ms. Lecky said that they need to continue this application and go back to the drawing board during a work session.

Ms. Penick agreed and requested detailed drawings of the existing conditions. She noted that there appears to be a polycarbonate roof covering the rear patio which was not presented to the Board. The representative stated that he was not responsible for that work and he can confirm with the owner. Ms. Penick criticized several other unapproved elements on the site including the polycarbonate fascia, the wooden shiplap material, the “pop-up” on the roof that covers the building window, and the attendant stand.

Mr. Jarrell requested that the applicant submit a detailed as-built plan drawing showing all the completed work on this site. The current documents are unclear.

Ms. Moss agreed with the Board’s comments and strongly encouraged a work session with the owner of the property in attendance as well.

Chair Irvin stated that the Board addressed her concerns and that the applicant should not complete any more work without approval.

Todd Sullivan asked to meet for a work session. Ms. Schwartz confirmed that the next meeting is scheduled for May 22, 2023 at 5:30 pm and that attendance is requested from the owner and everyone involved with the work on the site.

Ms. Lecky motioned to continue the application to the work session on May 22, 2023 with the property owner and contractor present. Ms. Moss seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

New Applications

D. COA FY23-0056 – 1305 Sophia Street – Andy Fitch requests to make alterations to this single-family residence including adding a shed dormer, constructing a balcony on the rear elevation, and adding brick to an existing chimney.

Andy Fitch was present to participate in discussion. There were no public comments.

Ms. Ross said the proposed changes are mostly compatible with the surrounding area. She said she had some concern with the upper story windows proposed to be added. The addition is not historic and is contemporary in its own right. It does not appear to be a shed dormer. She understands that this is a solution to providing additional headroom.

Ms. Galke stated that this was a thoughtful application that improves the site and complies with the guidelines.

Ms. Lecky stated that the application complies with the guidelines. The addition of brick to the chimney enhances compatibility and the application adds visual interest to the south side.

Ms. Penick asked the applicant to clarify the dimensions of the proposed chimney. Mr. Fitch said that the goal is to make it as small as they can according to code for the flue requirements. It will be similar to the existing chimney. Mr. Fitch elaborated on the design of the proposed chimney.

Ms. Moss said that she appreciated the improvements. She suggested that the applicant could alter the cornice return on the 2008 addition so that it doesn't continue on the non-gabled end.

Chair Irvin asked the applicant to elaborate on the design of the chimney. The intent is to be very similar to the existing. The 2008 addition is distinctly new, but they plan to make these as compatible as possible. The brick will match the previous approval. The elevation drawing is accurate. There was a discussion on the design of the addition.

Ms. Ross asked what the plan was for the existing gutters. Mr. Fitch said that the plan was to put the copper gutters back on the building.

Ms. Moss motioned to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Lecky seconded and the motion carried 6-0-1 with Mr. Jarrell abstaining.

E. D. COA FY23-0057 – 1313 Princess Anne Street – Rosemary O'Grady requests to make alterations to this commercial building including altering one front window, installing fencing and adding an awning over the entry door.

The applicant was not present. There were no public comments.

The Board members stated that they were in support of the application with the staff recommendation to retain the exterior chimney stack. Ms. Penick confirmed with staff that a specific clearance under the awning was not required because it was located on private property.

Ms. Moss motioned to approve the application on condition that the maximum height of all elements of the fence will be four feet and the exterior components of the chimney will be retained in place and repaired as necessary. Ms. Galke seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

F. COA FY23-0060 – 210 Ferdinand Street – Don Upperco, on behalf of Fredericksburg City Public Schools, requests to make alterations to the school building to reconfigure entry steps on the south side and add a wheelchair platform lift.

Don Upperco was present to participate in discussion. There were no public comments.

Ms. Ross clarified for the record that the school building known as Walker Grant High School was constructed in 1935 and is on the National Register. Ms. Schwartz confirmed that that 1938 date in the report was an error. The building that they are considering today is the 1952 school building, which is not on the National Register but is a contributing structure in the District. Ms. Ross researched the architectural firm known as Williams, Coyle & Blanchard, and she provided a brief summary of their work. Ms. Ross said the application was a simple solution that doesn't intrude much on the elevation. She asked for clarification on how the concrete extensions on the side of the steps would be treated.

Don Upperco the steps will be redone on the left side and then extend out. The six inches of concrete to the top of the porch will provide a level platform for wheelchair access. The lift itself will be on the right-hand side.

Ms. Galke stated that this application was well done and supported the staff recommendation. Ms. Lecky also supported the application and suggested the installation of an awning to protect people from the elements while the lift is in use.

Ms. Penick asked the applicant several questions regarding the lift. The mechanical mechanisms for the lift will be on the right side. It should not impede on the brick wall. The six-inch slab will be installed after the partial demolition of the existing step down. They will pour to level the slab to the base of the door. Ms. Penick provided some advice regarding the installation of concrete on top of concrete. She expressed support for the application and agreed with the staff recommendation.

Mr. Jarrell asked the applicant to clarify the materials of the existing concrete steps & walkway. Mr. Upperco stated that to his understanding, it is exposed aggregate. The steps will be poured-in-place concrete. The applicant elaborated on the design of the new brick wall.

Chair Irvin asked the applicant about the material for the vertical face of the new platform. Mr. Upperco said it would be brick. Chair Irvin supported the application.

There was a discussion on signage. Ms. Penick asked why there was a change of materials from concrete to brick. Mr. Upperco said it cost effective. Ms. Penick said that she would recommend that they use poured-in-place concrete rather than brick because it matches the current materials and will keep it cohesive with the rest of the building. She would approve this application if that is a condition on the motion. There was a discussion on the conditions.

Ms. Moss motioned to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. The vertical surface on the west side knee wall will be brick, capped in concrete to match the existing knee wall on the east side.
2. The new steps will be composed of poured-in-place concrete.

Ms. Ross seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

- G. COA FY23-0062 – 901 Caroline Street – Joshua Grady requests to make alterations to this commercial building including installing one window, adjusting the entry into the upper story apartment, and installing mechanical equipment.

Joshua Grady was present to participate in discussion. He stated that the HVAC system mock-ups were placed on the roof and are not visible from the street. There were no public comments.

Ms. Ross asked if the neon sign for Goolricks will be retained. Mr. Grady confirmed that this is a priority.

Ms. Galke expressed her support of the application.

Ms. Lecky expressed her support of the application. She asked a few clarifying questions. The top landing, where the seven-inch increased platform is located, will be set back the standard riser depth before the platform is installed. It will be similar to an additional stair in order to meet the threshold of the two units that are up there.

Ms. Penick also asked Mr. Grady to elaborate on the design of the stair landing. They are installing an extra seven-inch layer of steel decking on top of the landing to make up for the existing distance. The guardrails will extend upwards.

Ms. Moss stated that the mock-ups were helpful and she is ready to approve this application.

Chair Irvin asked if they will modify the stringers on either side of the stairs and suggested that they consider that portion of the design carefully. She supported the application.

Ms. Ross asked if the raised platform will shed water. There was a discussion on the landing design.

Ms. Moss motioned to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Lecky seconded and the motion carried 6-0-1 with Mr. Jarrell abstaining.

- H. COA FY23-0063 – 601 Caroline Street – The City of Fredericksburg requests to install a new door within a previously closed opening on the rear elevation of this municipal building.

Ms. Schwartz provided an overview of the application and recommended approval. The Board agreed with the recommendation. Ms. Penick recommended that the hinge be placed on the Wolfe Street side to ensure functionality.

Ms. Ross motioned to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Galke seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OTHER BUSINESS [\[02:41:10\]](#)

Ms. Schwartz shared that The Virginia Department of Historic Resources is conducting a study on resources associated with the underground railroad, or Liberty Line, extending from French John's Wharf, at the end of Canal Street, up to Liberty Town on Liberty Street. Dr. Paula Royster is putting together the historic context narrative. The Virginia Cultural Resources Information System will be updated as part of the work.

STAFF UPDATE [\[02:42:20\]](#)

There is a supplementary meeting scheduled for May 22, 2023 at 5:30 pm.

Ms. Moss requested an update on the Historic Preservation Working Group. It was not presented to City Council yet because members of the Council and the City Manager have not yet reached an agreement on how to proceed. This was deferred during consideration of the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Irvin adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.



Karen Irvin, Chair



8 May 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 May 8, 2023 meeting of the Architectural Review Board and submits the following comments on select projects.

Consent Agenda:

9.A. COA FY23-0058—1025 Caroline Street—Sign Installation

HFFI requests that this application for placement of a new sign be removed from the consent agenda and discussed further by ARB members. This building was designed by local architect Frank P. Stearns and is the only example of a high-style, Queen-Anne, commercial building with a turret and projecting bay window in the downtown commercial core. Several holes already exist in the brick and illustrate the difficulty of anchoring anything into the fine mortar joints of this façade. We hope that an alternative to damaging the brickwork and fine mortar joints might be found.

9.B. COA FY23-0059—314 Frederick Street—Fence Installation

This resource is one of more than 40 downtown Fredericksburg properties on which HFFI holds an easement for the purpose of preserving its historic architecture. While we have not been in communication with the property owner of COA applicant prior to this meeting, HFFI finds that this privacy fence does not negatively impact the historic integrity of this site.

9.D. COA FY23-0064—1015 Prince Edward Street—Split AC Unit Installation

HFFI requests that this application for placement of a new HVAC split unit be removed from the consent agenda and discussed further by ARB members. The windows at the first floor façade of this circa-1802 building are not from the first phase of its construction, but are historically significant in their own right. The foundation of the building does not appear to rise more than 2-feet from ground level; thus, the 30-inch height of the proposed HVAC unit will be visible above the vegetation and in front of the unique jib-type windows that mark the first floor façade. Further, the installation of such a unit requires a hole to connect with the interior machinery. The placement of the proposed unit suggests that this hole will pass through the trim or framing of one of these windows. We hope that an alternative to damaging the historic window framing might be found and that additional measures might be taken to adequately screen this unit from view along the façade.

Public Hearing:

10.A.i. COA FY23-0030—400 Princess Anne Street

HFFI appreciates how the alterations have enhanced the residential character of the proposed new infill project since it was initially introduced. The inclusion of measurements and prospective views of the design in context with surrounding historic resources continues to be a great improvement upon previous application(s). We also appreciate the thoughtful dialogue that has been exchanged between members of the public, ARB members, City staff, and the applicant over the past several months, and believe that the design of this new infill project has been significantly improved by this process.

The focus of this meeting on relatively minor revisions to the design of Unit 1 is appreciated. While no measurements are provided for the extant buildings at 400 and 404 Princess Anne Street to illustrate how the proposed infill relates to these resources, HFFI feels that its first, second, and third-floor heights are somewhat out of sync with adjacent historic resources, and suggests that the floor heights of Unit 1 be reduced to match those of the proposed Units 2-5 where the first and second floors are 10-feet tall. This would reduce the visual contrast between regulating lines created by Unit 1's fenestration and porch features and neighboring resources.

Furthermore, HFFI fully supports recommendations to remove the 4th story, roof-top access from the unit facing Princess Anne Street. Rooftop decks have no precedent in the neighborhood and are out of character with this historic residential area, especially at the heights proposed by this new infill project. As previously noted, the design guidelines require additional stories beyond one story taller than neighboring buildings to be "stepped back so it is not visible from adjacent streets" (9.C.2.). The 3-story roofline of Unit 1 will be highly visible from multiple angles and the inclusion of a 4th story for roof top access cannot be fully hidden from view.

10.A.ii. COA FY23-0032—905 Princess Anne Street

HFFI continues to appreciate the adjustments St. George's representatives have made to lessen the negative impacts of this project on their National Register-listed and historic quintessential Fredericksburg property.

We believe changes to the design of the proposed access ramp have reduced the ramp's physical impact to the property's historic features while simultaneously improving access to it. A 2017 publication from the Secretary of the Interior on the Rehabilitation of historic properties provides guidance on such sensitive alterations and recommends the following regarding accessibility (page 147-148):

- Complying with barrier-free access requirements in such a manner that the historic building's character-defining exterior features, interior spaces, features, and finishes, and features of the site and setting are preserved or impacted as little as possible.
- Working with specialists in accessibility and historic preservation to determine the most sensitive solutions to comply with access requirements in a historic building, its site, or setting.
- Providing barrier-free access that promotes independence for the user while preserving significant historic features.
- Finding solutions to meet accessibility requirements that minimize the impact of any necessary alteration on the historic buildings, its site, and setting, such as compatible ramps, paths, and lifts.

HFFI supports this proposal for constructing the access ramp and trusts that project leaders will continue working to minimize the project's adverse impacts to the church building and cemetery as that work moves forward.

St. George's is a careful steward of Fredericksburg's history and the historic assets the church oversees. Many people in the community are aware of the time and consideration the church has given to purchasing neighboring buildings to preserve and adaptively re-use in support of the congregation's needs, but also those of area children's early education, underprivileged individuals, and fellow citizens in need.

HFFI believes that the best solution for meeting the church's need for additional meeting space has been staring at us from across the street for about 7 years now. If local leaders would consider selling the Wallace Library to

the church, they could save THREE quintessential historic Fredericksburg properties at the same time—the church cemetery, the old library, and the Renwick Courthouse by reinvesting the profit from the library’s sale into its preservation. The success of the City’s effort to preserve the Mary Washington Monument and Lodge through its transfer to another great Fredericksburg non-profit provides a timely precedent and HFFI believes it is the kind of locally sourced, cooperative solution our community needs to resolve long-standing issues with simple problems with simultaneously embrace our past and future.

10.A.iii. COA FY23-0050—**503 Sophia Street**

HFFI is saddened to see this project become a kerfuffle of plastic and architectural elements that are out of keeping with previous COA approvals and ARB meeting discussions. We request that ARB members hold the applicant to a design and materials that are commonly found throughout the district, and respectfully request that any approval of new plastic materials be reserved for rare use in visually hidden locations in the future.