

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



Minutes
Architectural Review Board
June 12, 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)
Kelly Penick
Helen P. Ross
Laura Galke
James Jarrell IV
D.D. Lecky

Members Absent

Adriana Moss (Vice Chair)

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 6 members was present, and asked if public notice requirements had been met. Ms. Schwartz confirmed that they had. Ms. Schwartz stated that the applications for 816 & 823 Caroline Street were postponed to the July Meeting. Additionally, COA FY23-0030 – 400 Princess Anne Street is open for a continued public hearing tonight but action on this application is delayed to the July Public Hearing out of an abundance of caution over the public notice requirements. It will be advertised again for the July 10, 2023 meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA [00:01:58]

Ms. Penick motioned to remove COA FY23-0070 – 309 Caroline Street from the Consent Agenda and add it to the regular agenda for discussion. Chair Irvin stated that the new items will be considered first in order to be sensitive to everyone's time as the continued items may require longer discussions. Ms. Lecky agreed.

Ms. Lecky made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Ms. Galke seconded and the motion carried 6-0.

ANNOUCEMENTS & REPORTS [00:03:28]

Chair Irvin provided an educational presentation on Historic District Basics and authority given to the ARB.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None.

DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

None.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

CONSENT AGENDA [00:08:12]

- A. COA FY23-0064 – 1015 Prince Edward Street – Split AC Unit Installation
- B. COA FY23-0068 – 503 Sophia Street – Fence Installation
- C. ~~COA FY23-0070 – 309 Caroline Street – Fence Installation~~

Ms. Lecky motioned to approve the consent agenda as amended. Ms. Penick seconded and the motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING [00:20:05]

New Applications

- A. COA FY23-0069 – 312 Sophia Street / 100 Frederick Street – Thomas Mitchell requests to make alterations to this residential property including constructing awnings over an existing patio at the south elevation and an entry door on the west elevation and installing fencing.

Ms. Schwartz provided an overview of the application and Melissa Colombo, the project architect, was present to represent the application. There were no public comments.

Ms. Ross and Ms. Galke agreed with the staff recommendation to approve.

Ms. Lecky asked Ms. Colombo to elaborate on the floodlight over the existing wooden door on the side. Ms. Colombo confirmed that it would be removed. Ms. Lecky said she was in support of the application.

Ms. Penick, Mr. Jarrell, and Chair Irvin agreed with the staff recommendation to approve.

Ms. Lecky motioned to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Ross seconded and the motion carried 6-0.

- B. COA FY23-0070 – 309 Caroline Street – Fence Installation

Ms. Schwartz provided an overview of the application. The applicant was present to answer questions. There were no public comments.

Ms. Ross said she visited the site, and considers this a replacement in kind. She requested that the motion should include the condition that the finished side will be facing the outside. Mr. Shepard confirmed it will.

Ms. Galke and Ms. Lecky expressed their support of the application.

Ms. Penick asked how they plan to maintain the one-foot setback. Mr. Shepard explained that the existing fence sits on top of the concrete wall with concrete posts, which are deteriorating. They plan to set the fence back a foot and place gravel in the space between to prevent weeds. Mr. Jarrell said he was in support.

Chair Irvin asked a clarifying question on the fence design and supported the staff recommendation.

Ms. Penick motioned to approve the application with the condition that the gap between the fence and concrete retaining wall is filled by a weed barrier and gravel. Ms. Galke seconded and the motion carried 6-0.

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.

Property owner Mike Adams was present for discussion.

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

Mr. Hamilton Palmer, 401 Charles Street, spoke in opposition to the application stating multiple concerns including misinformation in the application, lack of detail regarding the trees on the property, lack of parking in the area, and missing information from the city address files. He formally requested any and all ex parte communication on this project including texts, emails, and social media. He requested that the Board continue to hear this project along with the other city reviews to include the Major Site Plan and Special Use Permit or Special Exception Permit.

Ms. Ross said she had reviewed the additional drawings submitted and had no further questions.

Ms. Galke stated her main concern for the four units on the west side was the mansard roof style which is currently open for refinement during the future discussion on details. Ms. Galke stated that the infill unit on Princess Anne Street generally comports with scale and massing requirements in the area, however the rooftop elements require further assessment during the details review.

Ms. Lecky noticed that the presence of trees is inconsistent across the drawings. The applicant stated that it was left out of certain elevations so that the Board could evaluate the building's street presence. There was a discussion regarding the trees planted along the property line. The Site Plan application will include a full landscape package that will address the trees.

Ms. Lecky stated that the elevations should include additional information regarding the height of the building for public clarity. The top mechanical unit is really out of place. She suggested that they explore alternative options because it comes across as a fourth story.

Mr. Adams said that this was the only feasible location for the mechanical units and provides an opportunity for rooftop space. Ms. Lecky stated that the unit is technically not fourth story but goes against the historic nature of that area.

Ms. Penick had no further questions but requested that the motion should clearly state that the mechanical unit is not included in the building scale and massing decision. Mr. Jarrell's comments were stated by the other Board members.

Chair Irvin stated that the application generally complies with the guidelines. There was a discussion on the mechanical unit and potential solutions.

Ms. Schwartz responded to the public comments in order to provide clarity to the overall review process. She reviewed the ARB's purview and what elements are governed by City staff during the Major Site Plan review process. The ARB does not have the authority to mandate planting or remove plantings.

They are included in the Guidelines just for understanding how they relate to the architecture and the site. The ARB does not have authority over parking counts, as that is determined by code and is reviewed as part of the site plan process. The applicant already submitted a Zoning Map Amendment application and a Special Use Permit for this property which will be reviewed by staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council.

Ms. Lecky motioned to continue COA FY23-0030 – 400 Princess Anne Street to the July 10, 2023 meeting. Ms. Penick seconded and the motion carried 6-0.

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

Ms. Schwartz provided an overview of the application and confirmed that the rear addition was built this year and is composed of inappropriate materials.

Mike Adams was present to represent the application. He summarized the construction on the property. The roof fascia was installed to hide the visible roof truss system. He explained that the protruding roof piece was a result of the truss system. He also addressed the covering of the panels and the boxing of the gutters.

Ms. Ross stated that the explanations helped her understand the events that transpired on the property. She stated that she feels misled from the initial application and that the completed work is not respectful of the original buildings. It stands out instead of being secondary. The Board allowed the new material because it was going to be minimal but the use surpassed what was approved. The vertical polycarbonate fascia takes away from the open and airy area. It appears that the owner is trying to make it appear more permanent.

Ms. Galke stated that the Board approved the previous application because the material was going to be minimally visible, however it is dominating now. The area used to be very open and airy and this installation appears to be an effort to enclose the space. Ms. Galke stated that she is comfortable with an exposed truss system. This application is inconsistent with the guidelines as it is currently constructed.

Ms. Lecky agreed and requested exact drawings of the truss system. She did not approve of the polycarbonate fascia. Mr. Adams explained that the approved drawings were misleading in the way they don’t depict the truss system. They decided to disguise them while in the field. In the original plans there was a “black void” which implies there wasn’t anything there. Ms. Lecky stated that was a misunderstanding and that it would be beneficial to meet on site with revised drawings.

Ms. Penick requested a site visit and updated accurate drawings of the existing conditions, including the work the building owner completed. Mr. Jarrell stated that he requested additional information three times now and will not approve this application without it. He agreed with Ms. Penick’s comments.

Chair Irvin agreed with the Board and was concerned with all the changes. She requested existing as-built drawings and proposed drawings to address the Board’s concerns. A site visit is necessary. There was a discussion on the additions and the panel screens.

Ms. Ross stated that it would be helpful if staff could assemble a timeline that provides a sequence of events on this application. Staff suggested a tentative work session date of June 26, but would consult with the Board and applicant.

Ms. Lecky motioned to continue COA FY23-0050 – 503 Sophia Street with a tentative site visit on June 26, 2023 and a public hearing on the July 10, 2023 meeting. Ms. Galke seconded the motion. Chair Irvin and Ms. Penick requested an amendment to the motion to include a request for complete as-built drawings of all the work and proposed corrections. Ms. Lecky and Ms. Galke accepted the amendment and the motion carried 6-0.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OTHER BUSINESS [01:35:40]

Ms. Ross asked about the status of a building under maintenance in the Historic District. Ms. Lecky stated that the work is on hold until the property owner has recovered from an injury.

STAFF UPDATE [01:37:20]

Ms. Schwartz notified the Board that the Renwick Working Group will be meeting soon and that the group will include a representative from the ARB. Ms. Penick volunteered to participate.

There will be a dedication of the new Virginia Historic Highway marker on Princess Anne Street on Wednesday June 21, 2023. The marker will be located at 900 Princess Anne Street but the event will take place at the Presbyterian Church across the street at 2:00 pm. This marker honors John Washington and his self-emancipation.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Irvin adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.



Karen Irvin, Chair

12 June 2023

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

Re: COA FY23-0030 – 400 Princess Anne Street

Dear ARB Members:

I am writing today to once again register my strong opposition to COA issuance for this proposal.

On numerous occasions, the ARB has requested that the applicant provide a clear and comprehensive overview of height comparisons to surrounding structures. This is an appropriate request and would significantly help the ARB and the public better understand key mass and scale relationships.

Much to the surprise and frustration of the public - and perhaps even members of the ARB - the applicant continues to studiously avoid making such a comparison, even citing confusion when directly and repeatedly requested by ARB members.

This latest set of figures once again is not fully responsive and does not meet the necessary threshold for the necessary comparisons. The new figures rely on slanted perspectives and arbitrary, incomplete datasets, and they continue to mislead both the Board and the public.

It doesn't have to be this way. We know this because the applicant has been able to effectively present height data in a clear and concise manner in earlier submissions - but only one small part of the data.

As far back as the March 13 meeting, the applicant has presented a straightforward side-by-side visual comparison of building heights - but notably using a cherry-picked sample of only the very tallest buildings in the area. See sheet A109, page 20 of that meeting's agenda.

Compare those cherry-picked comparisons to this new submission, which uses skewed perspectives and limits height comparison only to the adjacent Princess Anne St. property. In the earlier analysis, the applicant hand-picked tall structures as far away as the Charles Street townhomes - down the next block. In doing so, they conveniently ignored numerous smaller, more proximate structures such as the GWRC building, the Purina Tower Offices, 300 and 301 Princess Anne, 314 and 316 Frederick Street. Each of these are closer to the proposed new site

than the Charles Street townhomes. These properties are not invisible and are historically significant. Why are they so carefully ignored?

The new drawings also obscure the west and southwest sides. In one new drawing, a tree on the southwest corner of the site totally obscures the roofline from that angle. This conceals and minimizes the visual impact from a side of the block which would be completely dwarfed by a 40-foot-plus, 3-story-plus building.

The ARB, the neighbors, and the citizens of Fredericksburg deserve a more balanced, comprehensive, and evidence-based perspective. This is an expectation that the ARB itself has established in the eyes of the public through its prior, unfulfilled requests.

It is critical that the ARB once again continue this hearing until height comparisons to neighboring buildings are clearly and fully made.

Sincerely,

Forrest M. Wilhoit
307 Princess Anne St.