LEESBURG BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT

SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING AND WORK SESSION FOR COURTHOUSE SQUARE PROJECT: 11 JULY 2012

BAR Case No. THLP-2012-0040 Courthouse Square: Commercial Mixed-use Building on Loudoun Times Mirror property. Report #1 was June 4, 2012, Report #2 was June 27, 2012

This is Report #3

Reviewer:	Kim K. Del Rance, LEED AP
Address:	**9 E Market Street and interior of block enclosed by Market, Church, Loudoun and King Street**
Zoning:	B-1, H-1 Overlay District
Applicant/Owner:	Leesburg Value Fund I, LLC

Description of Proposal:

Leesburg Value Fund I, LLC (Owner) requests construction of a new 113,650 square foot mixed office use, retail and restaurant building with associated parking structure. Part of the proposed square –foot area will include an addition on to the Loudoun Times Mirror building at 9 E Market St. The parking structure will contain 336 parking spaces on five levels in support of the 113,650 square feet of by-right commercial, office and retail uses in downtown Leesburg. The maximum height of the building will reach approximately 63 feet with the HVAC and mechanical equipment located on the roof approximately 12 feet tall.

Site Description:

The site is comprised of four separate lots (PIN 231-38-6044, 231-38-6661, 231-38-5350, and 231-38-5459) measuring a combined total of approximately 1.7 acres. A portion of the property (9 Market Street, PIN 231-38-5459) contains the Loudoun Times Mirror building; an approximate 5,500 square foot building with an 18,296 square foot cinder block addition on the rear built in 1975. This portion of the site faces north and contains frontage on E. Market Street. The remainder of the site is currently paved and utilized for surface parking. It has frontage on Church Street and Loudoun Street SE and is surrounded by commercial uses fronting on King, Loudoun and Market Streets, the Loudoun County Government Center, and the Loudoun County Courts Complex. The property is zoned B-1, Community (Downtown) Business with H-1, Old and Historic Overlay District.

Context:

The subject property is situated on an original block of the Nicolas Minor subdivision established in 1759. Throughout the history of Leesburg, this block has been one of the primary commercial blocks in Leesburg. The existing architecture on the King Street, Market Street and Loudoun Street frontages reflect the architectural history of Leesburg from the ca 1758 McCabe Tavern/Paterson House and ca 1800 Lynch-Tebbs House on Loudoun Street to the ca 1810, remodeled in 1909 and 1971 20 S. King Street to the 1901, remodeled in 1920 – 1925 Loudoun National Bank Building at the corner of King and Market to the 1923 US Post Office at 15 Market Street and the 1916 Loudoun Times Mirror Building at 9 Market Street.

The Loudoun Times Mirror building is a contributing resource in the Old & Historic District. Built in 1916 as an automobile showroom it has withstood various use changes without altering the architectural integrity in its nearly 100 year history in its prominent location directly opposite from the courthouse complex on one of the most significant blocks in Leesburg's downtown.

Progress of Proposal:

The Review Process
The Staff Report for this July 11 special meeting will address the general mass and scale with respect to the Loudoun Times Mirror (LTM) Building and the new construction in one report since the demolition will be determined as part of this process.

The next step in the review process should be the applicant's proposal for the LTM building and a general assessment of the changes made since the June 4, 2012 session. Staff assessment of changes is made in this report, but no recommendation is provided with this report. Staff recommends the BAR proceed with the review of the application as detailed below and provide continued guidance to the applicant at each meeting. Based on the progressive review of the application, a final staff recommendation will be provided on August 6, 2012 which is the last scheduled BAR meeting before the 75 day deadline of August 17, 2012.

The review of this application will be approached as follows:
General assessment of the changes made in response to the comments on the proposal presentation on June 27, 2012 in the following categories as possible

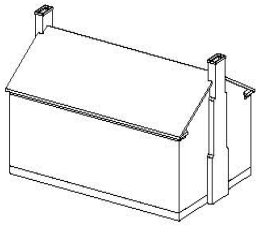
1. **Detailed assessment of the massing at the new construction:**
    - Building height
    - Roof forms
    - Cornices and Trim
    - Directional emphasis
    - Building components
    - Fenestration pattern
    - Materials

Future review and discussion:

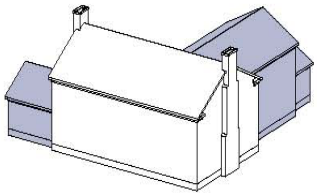
2. **Detailed assessment of elements:**
    - Doors, Windows and parking garage openings
    - Materials
    - Architectural details
    - Lighting
    - Mechanical Equipment
    - Landscaping
    - Other concerns as needed

STAFF ASSESSMENT:

Additive Massing



Many of Leesburg's historic residential structures have a simple original mass.



Often, additions have been made to these original structures over time, in response to the needs of the inhabitants.

Loudoun Times Mirror Building (LTM): Regarding the proposed treatment of the Loudoun Times Mirror building the Additive Massing element of the Modifications to Existing Buildings guidelines stipulate that additions that are appropriate are subordinate to the historic original building. Overwhelming the original building in scale is not appropriate.

Regarding the changes since the June 27, 2012 meeting:

1. **The second floor addition above the LTM is an improvement by withdrawing it further from the front facade, but it should always remain subordinate to the historic building. The northeast corner which faces Market St and the parking lot next to the Post Office should receded further somehow. An approach may be to cut out that corner instead of withdrawing the entire façade and replacing both new walls with glass, which should increase the transparency and soften the abruptness of this corner above the stepped parapet. A suggestion to reduce the abruptness may be to reduce the thickness of the edge of the wall and the roof edge where they protrude beyond the structural walls.**
2. **Using the red color on the second story and mostly glass on the third story with reduced dormers significantly lightens the addition which is an improvement.**
3. **The glass railings on the third story and the lack of visible railings are a significant improvement to the previous distracting railings.**

Loudoun Times Mirror Building with addition on rooftop

Staff Assessment of the scale and massing of the new construction: The following are broad comments about the changes to the mass and scale of the Courthouse Square proposal since June 27, 2012.

Building Height

- The BAR has the ultimate authority in determining the building height in accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section 6.3.3.E. note [7]

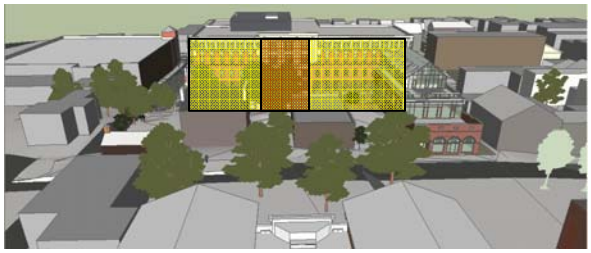
Massing

The Church Street elevation and corner of Church and Loudoun Street have been revised and broken down adequately to appear as an additive mass instead of a monolithic façade with varying materials. This façade needs no further comment at this stage of the development review.

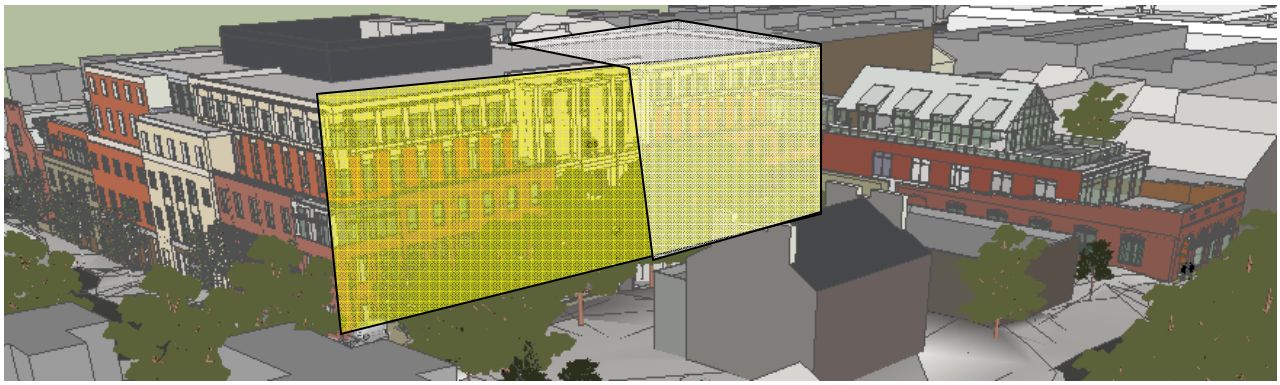
Corner of Loudoun Street and Church Street elevation

Market Street elevation

The Market Street façade, however, appears as one monolithic building with an inserted temple façade that is not centered, but attempts to engage the temple façade of the historic courthouse more than 300 feet away across the street. The scale of the columns and temple-like façade may be in scale with the building it is part of, but by segmenting the large building into what appears to be a tripartite of one building emphasizes the large scale of the building. Reducing the impact of the scale is helped by reducing the individual segments or pieces of the larger building.

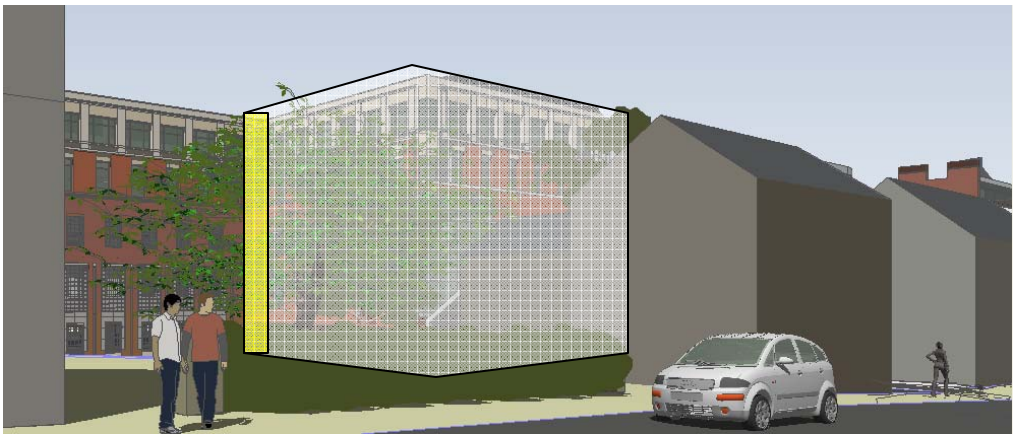


The segment with the columns may be able to work into a smaller scale, but the portions of the building on either side will need to be broken up or segmented differently to achieve this. A suggestion may be to treat the column façade as if it were a separate building, similar to the now Sona Bank at the corner of Market and King Street. The segment of the building to the right of the columns could be treated differently, albeit slightly, from the segment to the left of the columns, making it appear as an additive massing of three buildings instead of one with a tripartite façade.



King Street elevation

The massing of this building behind the historic buildings overtakes the smaller storefronts because the same material and fenestration pattern wraps from one façade over onto two more facades as if it were indeed the one large building that it is. To reduce the massing, the interior corner should be broken somehow, with material, color or a separation as if to show one part was a later addition to break the massing into a more traditional and local scale.



King Street elevation showing part of building separated visually by segmentation

Loudoun Street elevation

The Loudoun Street elevation is set back from the street far enough with breaks between buildings at a smaller scale, that the small variation in façade treatments on the lower levels fits in with the scale and rhythm of Loudoun Street. However, the continuous cornice and fenestration at the top floors causes the same issue on this elevation as with King Street and market Street. By differing the one segment shown above it will also relieve the Loudoun Street elevation the same way it relieves the King Street elevation.

Loudoun Street elevation with King Street elevation segmented

The rooftop "penthouse" with the curved façade appears additive as is common in cities. The curved façade has the same language as the curved façade on the ground level, both are modern, but their scale is appropriate and cannot be mistaken for historic additions.

Corner at Church Street from Market Street

The dissolving of the northern corner of the Church Street elevation is a relief of the blocky massing of that corner which faces directly the small house next to the city parking garage. When turning down Church Street that corner rises five stories so this small relief helps break down that massing into a more human and Leesburg scale.

Moving south down Church Street toward garage entrance

Directional Emphasis and Materials

- There can still be improvements made in the overall scale of the Market Street and King Street elevations by using a change of materials or color and varying the roof heights by more than one foot that is less overwhelming to the block.

Cornices and Trim

- The varying cornice and trim treatments on the Church Street elevation should be taken into account on the Market and King Street facades. Using a continues cornice along the entire stretch of building on Market Street only being broken by the column façade gives the project a massive effect that is part of the overwhelming scale issue at hand. The same is true for the continuing cornice and trim on the King Street elevation.

Fenestration Pattern

- The window patterns on Market Street and Ling Street still have a horizontal banding effect which compresses the overall massing and works against the verticality. Taking cues from the successful Church Street façade should alleviate this. The Church Street façade can be a guide to using verticality and segmentation to reduce the massing over the rest of the building.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Due to the size and nature of this project, it has been determined the review of the Courthouse Square project will be divided into various elements as provided in the Review Process section of this report. As a result, staff will not offer an overall recommendation at this time, but only start the review process by offering the points of concern and how the previous comments have been addressed with the application outlined above.

The BAR shall note that the 75 day review deadline is August 17, 2012. This deadline can be extended at the request of the Applicant if it is determined additional time is needed for the thorough review of the application.