



**LEESBURG BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT**

SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING AND WORK SESSION FOR COURTHOUSE SQUARE PROJECT: 25 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, and Report #3 was July 11, 2012

This is Report #4

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 25 special meeting will address the last of the general mass and scale with respect to the new construction on King and Loudoun Street elevations.

The next step in the review process is a general assessment of the changes made since the initial 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 July 2 and drawings submitted and received July 23, 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

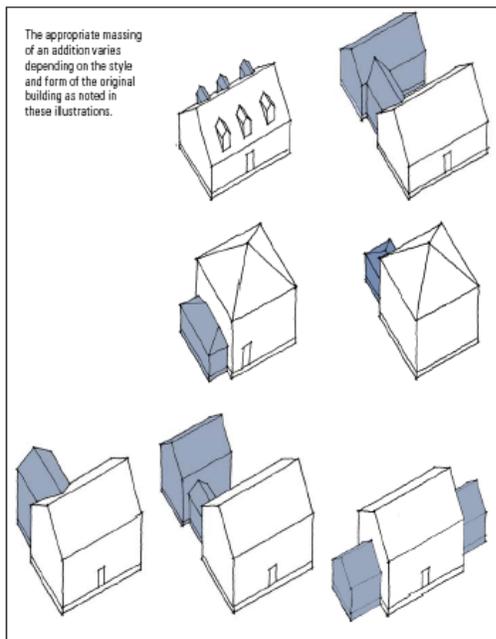
2. Detailed assessment of elements:

- Doors, Windows and parking garage openings
- Materials
- Architectural details
- Lighting
- Mechanical Equipment
- Landscaping
- Other concerns as needed

Future review and discussion:

- Landscaping and screening
- Lighting
- Other concerns as needed
- Final decision on entire project

STAFF ASSESSMENT:



Loudoun Times Mirror Building (LTM): 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 July 11, 2012 meeting:

1. The second floor addition above the LTM is an improvement by withdrawing it further from the front façade so that it does not quite reach the edge of the windows below and clearly reads as subordinate to the LTM building.
2. The rendered color red is more saturated than the brick with sand color mortar and should be subdued in saturation to allow the addition to read as lighter than the LTM as an addition that respects the historic building it is attached to.



Experimenting with more neutral colors for the second floor may help the addition stay subordinate to the LTM building.

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 July 11, 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 - review of Market, King and Loudoun Street elevations

The Loudoun Street elevation has been broken into modules and the scale has been reduced. The exception is the top floor windows as they do not change in scale, materials or detail as the floors wrap from Loudoun to King to Loudoun to King and then Market—giving away the fact that this is one large building behind the row of historic buildings below and in front of it. The context that currently hides much of the view may not always exist and should not be counted on to hide the scale of the building.

The Loudoun County government building is the closest to the scale of this building and is noted in the guidelines as needing improvement in its façade treatment, so it should not be looked to for guidance.

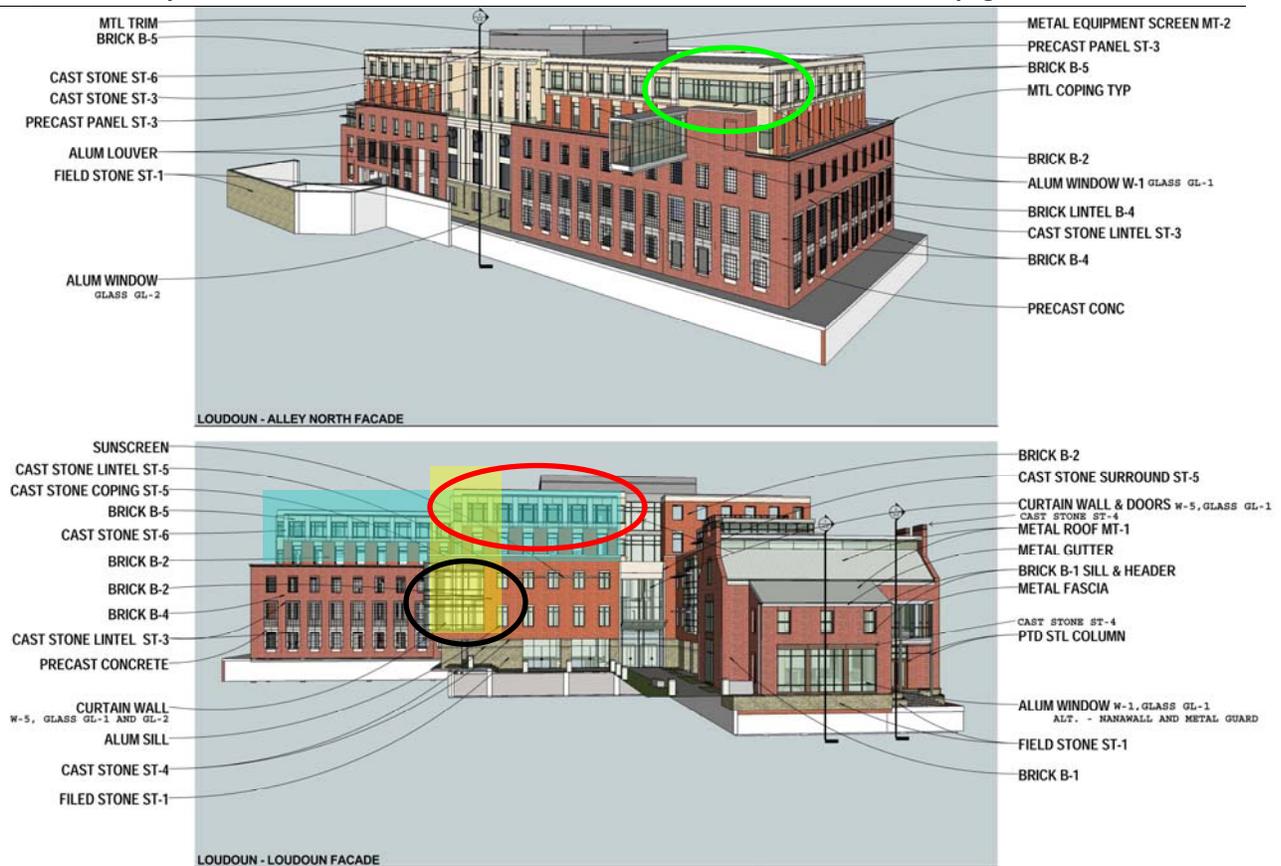


This large unmodulated mass would be more consistent with the historic structures in the area by varying the wall planes and a more strategic use of different wall materials.

Directional Emphasis and Materials

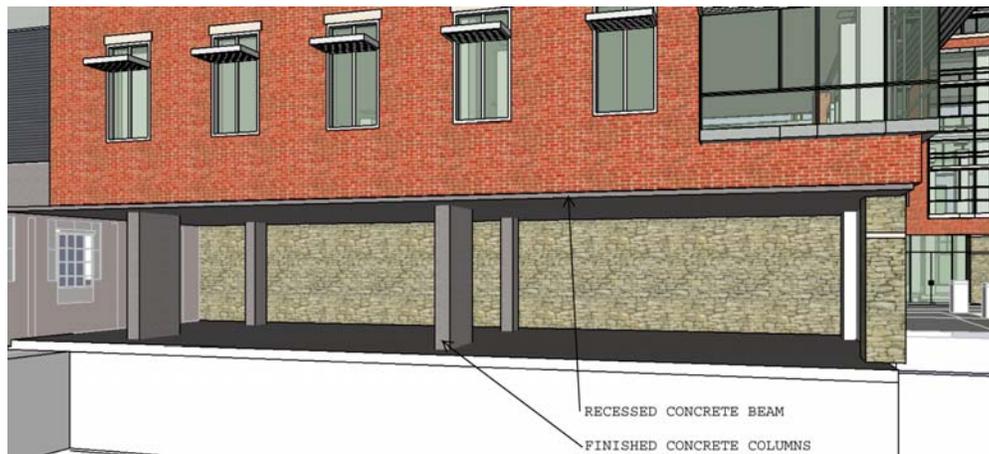
- There can still be improvements made in the overall scale of the Market Street and King Street elevations as noted on the following page, by using a change of materials, fenestration, color or varying the roof heights. Seen below, changes made to date have been successful at breaking down the massing. Similar steps can be taken on the Loudoun Street elevation, as shown later.





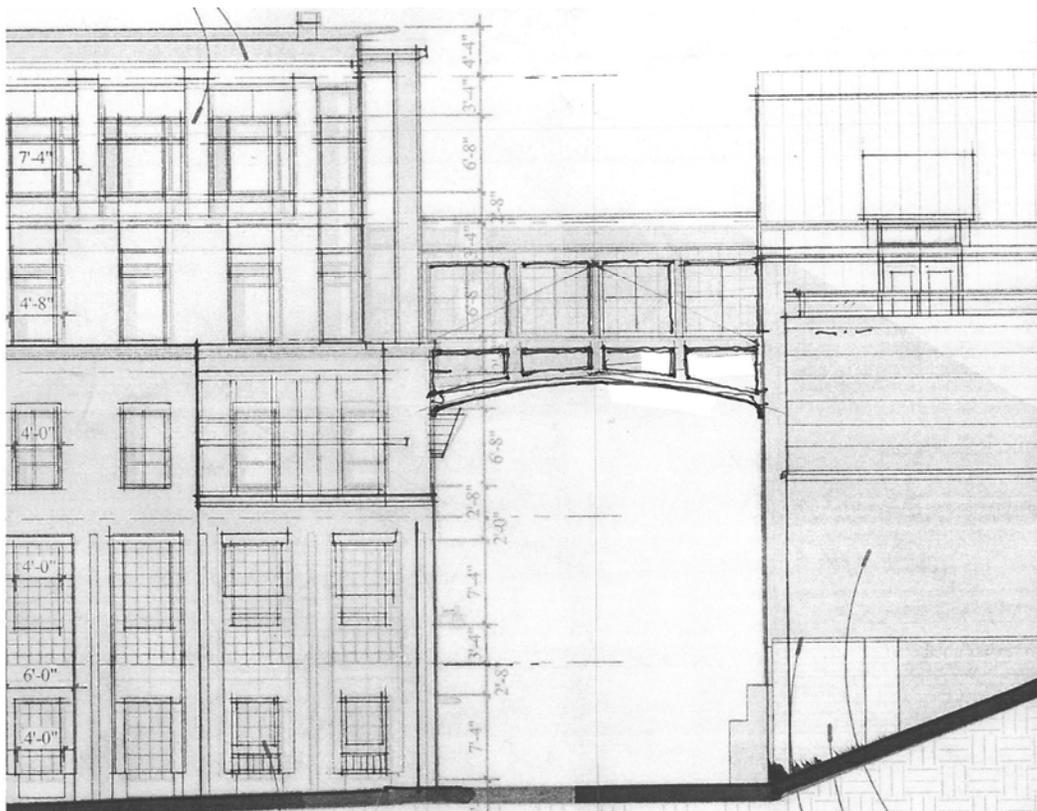
Fenestration and Curtain Wall

- **In green:** The altering of the fenestration pattern on the Market Street elevation successfully breaks down the massing and allows the column temple-like element to be centered, by giving an additive appearance to this corner without disrupting the rhythm of the façade.
- **In red:** The same alteration of fenestration moved to the Loudoun street elevation could do more to break down the massing and give the southernmost façade of Loudoun Street its own prominent character for pedestrians since this will be their main entry. Since this would mean a large expanse of glass, care should be taken in its placement rather than extending it for the whole floor. Wrapping the corners only or centering it could relieve some of the massiveness.
- **In black:** While the guidelines do not specify materials or deny them outright, their suitability as compatible with traditional materials requires a closer look at the use of a curtain wall over a two story high section of the building which wraps the corner from Loudoun to King Street. Ch. VII M 2. "Size details and related features so that their scale respects classical proportions as exhibited on historic structures through the district". The use of such a large piece of curtain wall should be discussed as to how much, if any, of it is appropriate in this form. Previously, the breakdown of framing for the glass had been discussed by the board, but it was unclear at that time that a curtain wall system would be used. Storefront framing has been used in commercial buildings for some time; however, curtain walls may be considered glass walls, as opposed to windows, making their proportion to solid wall surfaces important.



Structure over parking as discussed in July 11, 2012 meeting:

Questions over the “floating bricks” and the use of plain concrete columns like utilitarian parking garages have been answered with the solution provided above by the architects. The concrete structure is now showing and the concrete columns will be shaped and finished in the same manner as the exposed structure.



Pedestrian bridge from LTM to new construction in sketch shown above:

The addition of the structural steel arch is appropriate and recalls historic steel bridges, some of which are still used locally.

Architectural Details

- Aluminum Sunscreens and light shelves: The use of light shelves to bounce light further into buildings and reduce the amount of artificial lighting while they also shade the lower portion of window from the heat reducing dependence on mechanical cooling is a functional aspect of the building and should be treated as more than an aesthetic item. Their proportions on this building are in scale with the fenestration pattern and the material, metal, is appropriate according to the guidelines.
- Glass and steel canopy: This is an architectural feature that while not common to Leesburg, is not a new invention and has been used on buildings that are now historic as well as added to historic buildings that have been rehabilitated. The proportion of the canopy is appropriate to the scale of this façade. The fact that no support is visible may be of concern as historic canopies usually were held by cables or some other visible support as traditional buildings usually display their support features. This is not addressed specifically in the guidelines, but should be considered.
- Aluminum louvers: On the Market Street façade the louvers, as shown, appear as industrial louvers often seen over fans in the back of restaurants and their use in this form on a prominent façade is not appropriate. The louvers shown on the third floor “lantern” above the LTM building as seen on drawing A-3 is an appropriate way to handle louvers.

Landscaping and lighting

No landscaping has been submitted for review.

Light fixtures have been submitted, but no lighting plan has been submitted for review.

Mechanical

Mechanical screening is shown on the rooftop, but heights are not given and the material and color have not been submitted other than “metal” as MT-2 is not listed on the material list provided. Sight line drawings showing the visibility or lack thereof of the mechanical systems on the roof should be submitted to ensure they will not be seen and that the screening will be appropriate.

Materials

The materials list submitted is appropriate in general, but specifics on each and every item used on the exterior of this building are not possible at this juncture. It is recommended that the approval of some specific items be treated as addendums to this certificate to be approved later by the preservation planner or the Board of Architectural Review at a later date, guided by conditions on this application.

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 continue 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.