



LEESBURG BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW STAFF REPORT

WORKSESSION APRIL 9, 2012
AGENDA ITEM 3b

BAR CASE No.: THLP-2011-0013
Reviewer: Christopher Murphy, Zoning Administrator
Address: 104 Loudoun Street, LLC.
Zoning: B-1, H-1 Overlay District
Applicant/Owner: PR Construction
Architect: T.J. Gilbride Architects, Inc
Builder: PR Construction

BAR Public Hearing: The public hearing was held at the BAR's Regular Business Meeting on March 19, 2012. The BAR deferred the vote on the application in order to discuss matters raised during the public hearing at a work session, including:

- Location of the driveway with a single parking space in front of building
- Location of the primary entrance/lack of a door in front façade
- Lack of a raised foundation
- Installing shutters on windows on the side elevations
- Examination of the massing of the building – provide an elevation drawing showing the proposed building compared with its adjoining buildings on 102 and 106 Loudoun Street
- Possibility of placing a stoop on the Loudoun Street elevation for a door on that façade

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

New mixed-use building. The applicant proposes to construct a new 2½ story, 5-unit residential/commercial – mixed use building on a vacant lot on the north side of Loudoun Street S.W.

Removal of existing garage. This will necessitate the removal of the garage portion of the building at 106 Loudoun Street that encroaches onto the subject property. Since less than 40% of the exterior wall/roof of the 106 Loudoun building will be removed this is considered to be an alteration and not a demolition in accordance with TLZO Sec. 7.5.8.B. The attached garage to be razed to accommodate the proposed building is part of a 1960s addition to the back of the 18thc Vernacular structure at 106 Loudoun Street commonly known as the “Old Stone House”. This 1960s addition is described by the Historic District Survey as an, “insensitive modern brick 2-story wing that detracts from the character of the Old Stone House.” By this description it can be surmised that no portion of the 1960s addition is contributing to the historic integrity of the district. It can be argued that the removal of the garage portion of the 1960s addition helps to make that addition detract less from the character of the neighborhood. The Historic District Survey makes note of the visibility of the 1960s addition from Loudoun Street when moving west along that street. The proposed building will effectively screen the 1960s addition from street view except for a small portion that will be visible due to the opening in the street front to accommodate the driveway.

WORK SESSION DISCUSSION ITEMS FROM THE 3/19 PUBLIC HEARING

- **Location of the driveway with a single parking space in front of building**

Inconsistent with Chapter VII Orientation, Section D. There is only one other curb cut along this block of Loudoun Street and it sits generally opposite the subject property on the south side of Loudoun Street. A critical difference between that curb cut and the proposed driveway on the site is that the driveway opposite provides access to a parking area in the rear of the building whereas the proposed driveway allows a vehicle to sit in the front of the building. This feature is more characteristic of automobile-oriented, suburban design that is inappropriate on this block of Loudoun Street. Maintaining this driveway and locating an entrance at its end 27.5 feet from the street creates an inconsistency with the Orientation guidelines provided in Section D of Chapter VII Orientation.

Note that there may be a sight distance issue with the proposed driveway due to the fact that the proposed building will lessen existing sight distance when exiting the property. Prior to site plan approval applicant will have to demonstrate that sight distance requirements are met when exiting the driveway.

ADA Accessibility. The driveway serves a second purpose in addition to vehicle parking; it also provides the ADA Accessible Entrance to the building. Note the slope illustrated on Sheet A2.4 Side Elevation(West) leading from the sidewalk to the actual main entry to the building. Two questions staff recommends the BAR discuss with the applicant regarding this design are:

1. Can the minimum required slope for the ramp be achieved closer to the street?
2. Why is the site not designed to accommodate parking *behind* the building, as it is where parking is accommodated on site elsewhere on this block, instead of in front?

In addition, applicant should be aware that a question that will be posed during site plan review is this: How will the Accessible Entrance be maintained when a vehicle is parked in the driveway?

- **Location of the primary entrance/lack of a door in front façade**

Front door added. The Applicant has submitted revised plans dated April 2, 2012 that show an entry door on the Loudoun Street (south or front) façade as recommended at the March 19, 2012 public hearing. This revision helps greatly in bringing the building into compliance with the Orientation guidelines by placing what appears to be the main entry on the front (street) façade of the building, which suggests an original building with a later addition on the rear. However the 27.5 feet deep driveway remains an inappropriate part of the design.

The BAR should comment on the location of the entry door. The April 2 plan set shows this door on the western bay of the façade versus the center bay. Staff commented on March 19 that placing an entry door in the western bay will separate that entrance as far as possible from the entrance at 102 Loudoun Street. The result of this separation and the similar architectural style of the proposed façade and the existing façade at 102 Loudoun could create the appearance of one large building when viewed from locations farther down Loudoun Street.

Door design. The new entrance is depicted on the Front Elevation (South) on Sheet A2.1 as a 6-paneled door with a classical-style door surround. The BAR should decide on whether this classical-style door surround is appropriate for use on a design that is more reminiscent of a Georgian style. Instead of the peaked cap above the door, is a transom more appropriate?

The entry door is recessed into the façade and is accessed via stairs composed of limestone tread and risers. As a result of the recess, the design is achieved without having to encroach into the public right-of-way with a stoop.

- **Possibility of placing a stoop on the Loudoun Street elevation for a door on that façade**

Stoop in right-of-way not permitted. The question was raised on March 19 regarding whether or not a stoop might be permitted to be constructed on this block of Loudoun Street considering the existence of other stoops on this block. Leesburg Town Code Section 30-33 only permits those types of projections in rights-of-way that are unfixed or typically installed high above the ground. Section 30-35 prohibits projections that, among other qualifiers, interfere with the free and unencumbered passage of pedestrians, and which project, whole or in part, from the right-of-way line more than 3½ feet. In combination, these two sections prohibit the construction of new stoops in the Historic District. Examples of this prohibition are demonstrated by the entryways to the Chamberlin Building at 210 Wirt Street and Joanna Costen's building at 6 Wirt Street.

- **Lack of a raised foundation**

Foundation apron added. The April 2, 2012 revised plan set depicts a raised foundation measuring 1' 1¾" high on the entire building described as "brick foundation apron". No other information has been provided describing the type or color of brick and mortar proposed for the raised foundation.

- **Installing shutters on windows on the side elevations**

Shutters added to side elevations. The April 2, 2012 revised plan set shows the addition of the same paneled shutters with hinges and shutter dogs on the windows on both the eastern (Sheet A2.3) and western (Sheet A2.4) facades of the front portion of the building as are proposed on the front (south) façade.

- **Examination of the massing of the building – provide an elevation drawing showing the proposed building compared with its adjoining buildings on 102 and 106 Loudoun Street**

Comparison elevation provided. Recall that Chapter VII. Guidelines for Additions to Existing Buildings and New Construction, paragraph F. Massing and Complexity of Form indicates, "[I]n order to maintain the rhythm and balance established by the massing and complexity of form of existing historic buildings, new construction should be consistent with the historic pattern of building massing and complexity of form".

On Sheet A2.1 of the April 2 revision, the Applicant has provided elevation views of the proposed building compared to adjoining properties. From the scaled elevation drawings, we know the height of the peak of the roofs running parallel to Loudoun Street measure 37 feet. The peak of the ridge running perpendicular to those of the front and back measures 36 feet in height. The comparison elevations, however, do not

provide a scale, instead they only provide the height of the eave for each building depicted on that elevation. Looking at the heights of the eaves provided the proposed building is not the tallest, nor the shortest building on the block. However, it is clear from the elevation drawings that the proposed building will be the tallest building on the block when measured to its absolute highest point at the peak of the roof. This is the dimension requested by the BAR to be shown on the plans at the March 19th meeting.

Paragraph G. of Chapter VII, Height, Width, Scale, and Dimensional Expression, states that the size of a building is what defines the building as contributing to or being in conflict with the character of the existing structures in the District.

Because of the height of its roof and its proportional relationship (height) to overall height gives the proposed building the appearance of a vertical expression. This vertical expression contrasts with the typical Georgian and Federal architectural styles existent on this Block of Loudoun Street which is a horizontal expression. It also gives the building the greatest mass of any structure on the 100 block of Loudoun Street.

Subparagraph G states, “[I]f a proposed building is larger than the surrounding contributing buildings, mitigate the impact of the larger building through architectural design to make it compatible with the smaller scale of Leesburg’s historic structures”. One way of achieving this smaller scale suggested by the H-1 Guidelines is using traditional floor-to-floor heights in a new building. In the proposed building, it appears that a more modern floor-to-ceiling height is maintained on each floor of the structure. Where this creates an impact on the scale, is maintaining such a height in the attic or the ½ story 3rd floor. The height of the proposed roof appears to be higher in proportion to the heights of the floors beneath the roofs on the adjacent buildings as illustrated on Sheet A2.1. The BAR should discuss the possibility of adjusting the proposed floor-to-ceiling heights to mitigate the inconsistent appearance of a vertical expression in the proposed building, as well as mitigate “looming over” the buildings at 102 and 106 Loudoun Street.

- **Balcony design**

New design proposed. The April 2 revisions show a new design for the balconies proposed for the rear of the second and third floors. The original submission showed a black wrought iron balcony having a style more reminiscent of the deep south, e.g., Louisiana, Mississippi, etc. instead of one typical of historic Northern Virginia or Leesburg.

No additional information describing the new balcony design has been submitted other than that provided on Sheets A2.2 and A2.3 of the April 2 revision. Sheet A2.2 describes the balconies as, “powder-coated wrought iron balcony (typ of 2)”. Sheet A2.3 describes the balconies as, “standard rail & balusters w/ painted wood porch balcony and painted bracket (typ of 2)”.

- **Possible conflict with B-1 zoning requirements.**

The following information relates to the use of the building and may have no bearing on the exterior discussion by the BAR. However, it is included here to avoid any future confusion at the time of construction. Staff notes that the proposed building layout shows five separate residential apartments. However, the application states that the building is a “5 unit residential/business – mixed use building.” The March 19, 2012 staff report also described it as such. This is important because if the building is entirely residential, then it is a new multi-family structure and different

zoning requirements apply. Specifically, a new multi-family building in the B-1 District can only be constructed on a lot that is a minimum of 10,000 square feet (TLZO Sec. 6.3.3.A) with a minimum lot width of 100 feet (TLZO Sec. 6.3.3.B). Also, any multi-family development with a density exceeding 8 dwelling units per acre must comply with TLZO Sec. 9.3.15, which requires 30% open space on the lot and active recreation space to be provided. However, TLZO Sec. 9.3.15.I states “Multi-family dwellings shall be permitted by right in the B-1 District, up to a maximum of five (5) units and must be located above the first floor of a commercial or office building.” In such cases, the multi-family lot area, frontage width and Sec. 9.3.15 open space and recreation requirements do not apply. In order for this proposal to have multi-family residential uses, the ground floor must be commercial.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION/DRAFT MOTION

(Based on the BAR’s discussion at the meeting, any changes to the language of either part of the motion should be incorporated as necessary.)

Based on the fact that:

Issues persist in the massing and scale of the proposed building design that make it inconsistent with the H-1 Old and Historic District Design Guidelines, Chapter VII, Paragraph G. Height, Width, Scale, and Directional Expression.

Staff recommends deferral of TLHP-2012-0013 to allow the BAR time to work with the applicant to amend the proposal, bringing it into compliance with the H-1 Design Guidelines. Specifically, staff recommends further discussion of the following details:

- The overall height of the proposed building and its result on scale, massing, and directional expression.
- Continued use of driveway for parking in front of building. Alternative design for parking behind building.
- Location on the building and design of the surround for the proposed door on the front (south) façade of the building.
- Design specifications for the balconies proposed on the north (rear façade) of the building.
- Any other issues identified by the BAR