



LEESBURG BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW STAFF REPORT

PUBLIC HEARING AND WORK SESSION: 4 JUNE 2012
AGENDA ITEM 3E

BAR Case No. THLP-2012-0040 Courthouse Square: Commercial Mixed-use Building on Loudoun Times Mirror property

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.

Background of Proposal:

See attached report by Wade Burkholder for background information on the review of the special exception TLSE-2011-0002 approving the parking structure use element of the Courthouse Square project.

Past applications include site plan TLPF-1987-0035 approved June, 1988 that approved a 12,632 square foot addition to the Loudoun Times building.

In 2002 a sketch plan was submitted for review by Town staff showing an expansion of the Loudoun Times Mirror building, three multi story units (mixed use?) on the corner of Church St and Loudoun St, with a parking structure. No specific information relative to square foot area of the proposal or uses is provided in the record for this sketch plan.

In January, 2007 an application was submitted by the Loudoun Times Mirror c/o Cavalier Land Development Corporation to rezone the subject property to PEC – Planned Employment Center in order to construct a 134,026 square foot office with support uses and a four-level parking structure. This application was never accepted for review by the Town due to the application being incomplete, as well as there being non-compliance issues with basic zoning requirements of the PEC District. The Applicant chose not to proceed with the project.

Site Development/Zoning Issues:

On May 2011, the Town Council adopted TLOA-2011-0001 which increased the maximum building height in certain portions of the B-1 Zoning District to 65 feet so long as specific conditions were met. The proposal meets the Zoning Ordinance qualifications for the maximum height in this portion of the B-1 District; however, the final determination of building form, including height, will be made by the BAR in accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section 6.3.3.E note [7].

TLSE-2011-0002 was granted conditional approval on March 27, 2012 by Resolution 2012-0041. See the attached report provided by Wade Burkholder for additional information on the special exception approval. (Attachment 1)

The Review Process

The Staff Report for the June 4 work session will address the demolition request and the general mass and scale with respect to the Loudoun Times Mirror (LTM) Building due to the fact that demolition of the concrete addition to the LTM is fundamental to the applicant's development proposal for the site. Staff recommends that the BAR take action on the demolition request only, at the June 4, 2012 work session.

The next step in the review process should be the applicant's proposal for the LTM building and a general assessment of the mass, scale and changes to an existing historic structure. No staff recommendation is provided with this report. Staff recommends the BAR proceed with the review of the

application as detailed below and provide guidance to the applicant at each meeting. Based on the progressive review of the application, a final staff recommendation will be provided on July 16, 2012 which is the last scheduled BAR meeting before the 75 day deadline of August 3, 2012.

The review of this application will be approached as follows:

1. General assessment of the massing at the Loudoun Times Mirror Building and initial mass and scale comments on the proposal – June 4, 2012

Future review and discussion:

2. General assessment of the site plan features:

- Accessibility – Pedestrian and Drive locations
- Parking areas
- Other concerns as needed

3. General assessment of the massing at the new construction:

- Building height
- Roof forms
- Directional emphasis
- Building components
- Fenestration pattern
- Materials

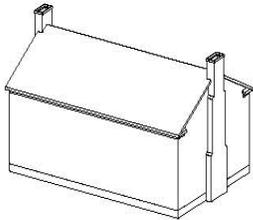
4. Detailed assessment of elements:

- Roof forms
- Doors and Windows
- Materials
- Architectural details
- Cornices and Trim
- Lighting
- Mechanical Equipment
- Landscaping
- Other concerns as needed

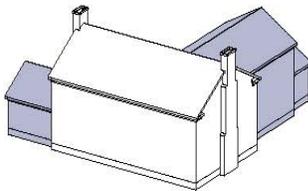
Attachment 2 is a four page table provided by Chairman Koochagian of the various outline areas for notes and a future timetable structure.

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: 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.

The roof, windows, doors, foundation and architectural details are to be repaired or restored where possible and only replaced when necessary with the same materials and details as the original. The guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation both state this. See chapters V and VII and Appendix A.

Specifically:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation - Appendix A

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires **minimal change to the defining characteristics** of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The **removal of historic materials or alteration of features** and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. **Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.**

In order for the applicant to move ahead with the design it is suggested that guidance by the BAR be given early on as to what changes will be allowable to the historic Loudoun Times Mirror building considering that the H-1 Guidelines stipulate:

- Additions to historic buildings are to be subordinate to the main building
- The removal of historic materials or alteration of features shall be avoided

Staff encourages the following when considering the treatment of the Loudoun Times Building as part of the Courthouse Square project:

1. **Allow and encourage the restoration of the original openings on the side elevations of the Loudoun Times Mirror building with the condition that the windows to be inserted be approved at a later date with the other architectural details.**
2. **Allow the restoration and repair only on the front elevation of the Loudoun Times Mirror building.**
3. **Building floors above the Loudoun Times Mirror Building should be designed so that the scale and mass of those floors maintains a subordination to the existing historic**

building in accordance with the Additive Massing element provided in the H-1 Guidelines.

Staff Assessment of the scale and massing of the new construction. The following are initial broad comments about the mass and scale of the Courthouse Square proposal

Building Height

- The proposal as presently designed, will compete with the historic courthouse as opposed to being compatible with it.
 - The BAR has the ultimate authority in determining the building height in accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section 6.3.3.E. note [7]
- The scale of the proposal may alter the entire visual experience from the courthouse lawn.

Massing

The scale of the proposal is larger than anything historic in Leesburg. Various characteristics of the design embellish the mass of the building by giving it the appearance of being a single unit. Those design elements include the following:

- The upper floors appear as a horizontal band which is not in keeping with the scale of Leesburg or the verticality of the commercial buildings downtown.
- The large cornice is overwhelming when compared with neighboring buildings. It should be compatible with the historic cornices found in Leesburg.
- The floating facades on Church Street do not give the appearance of separate buildings and the materials changes above the foundation midway up the building are jarring and not compatible with the traditional scale and techniques for material applications in Leesburg.
- The shallow setbacks of the upper floors give the appearance of false fronts rather than appearing as separate buildings which additive massing will accomplish.
- The two story columns on the north elevation at roof height are out of scale by their placement on upper floors. As such they will compete with, rather than respect, the columns and historic courthouse complex across Market Street.

Techniques for mitigating the impact of larger massed buildings are provided in the H-1 Guidelines.

Directional Emphasis and Materials

- Using a change of materials and making this single unit appear to be two or three units with roof heights that vary more than one foot would immediately change the overall scale to something more appropriate that does not overwhelm the block.

Fenestration Pattern

- The window pattern is unnecessarily complex for the historic architectural setting of the proposed building. The type, size and location of windows can be revised to be more in keeping with the H-1 Guidelines. This will contribute to mitigating the scale and massing of the proposed building.
- The top floor windows are the largest which is the reverse of the traditional architectural pattern in Leesburg whereby windows get smaller as they are higher on a building. The largest windows are found on the ground floor of historic buildings in the H-1. The large sheets of glass

on top floors of a building are more characteristic of a suburban-style corporate office park building rather than a historic downtown commercial 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 with the application outlined above.

The BAR shall note that the 75 day review deadline is August 3, 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.

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Special Exception TLSE-2011-0002 background report by Wade Burkholder
 2. Review outline provided by Chairman Koochagian