



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of October 15, 2011

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT-Revised Policy Objective

DATE: October 12, 2011

SUBJECT: Amend the Phase 1 Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) list; and Adopt the Phase 1 HRI Goals and Policy Objectives.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) Amend the Phase 1 Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) list by moving 3401 Fairfax Drive from the “Demolished” to “Minor” category and 4800 31st Street South from the “Important” to “Essential” category; and
- 2) Adopt the Phase 1 Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) Goals and Policy Objectives (with revised language to Goal #4, Policy Objective #4 in revised Attachment A).

DISCUSSION: This report addresses an issue raised by the Planning Commission at its meeting of October 5, 2011, and recommends revised language to Goal #4, Policy Objective #4.

Planning Commission: On October 5, 2011, the Planning Commission voted unanimously, with one abstention, to support the proposed Phase 1 HRI Goals and Policy Objectives. The discussion focused primarily on two matters of concern: procedural elements related to implementation of the HRI, and how TDR would be used related to the different ranking categories.

In regards to procedural elements, the Commission asked for clarification about the County’s intent to “pursue” local historic designation for Essential properties versus “encourage” local historic designation for Important properties. Staff responded that active outreach will be conducted about local designation, state and National Register designation, and preservation easements, with owners of Essential properties as the first priority, followed by owners of buildings in the Important category.

The Planning Commission also inquired about how the HALRB review process for new development proposals affecting Essential and Important properties would correspond with the

County Manager:

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Staff: Michael Leventhal and Cynthia Liccese-Torres, DCPHD

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Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) process and Planning Commission approval. Staff responded that these processes would occur concurrently as they do now. To date, this parallel review has not hindered new development projects, nor has it delayed any review by the SPRC or the Planning Commission. As evidenced by projects completed recently in Clarendon, other parts of the Metro corridor, and along Columbia Pike, the HALRB's involvement in design review has resulted in significant improvements to the overall design of these projects.

In terms of how TDR would be applied within the HRI categories, the commissioners did not question that TDR received from a historic site listed in the HRI would not be used on a project that proposes the demolition of a property listed as Essential or Important (see specifically Goal 4, Policy Objective #4). However, the Planning Commission questioned whether this policy should be extended to include properties in the Notable category. Staff responded that many of the Notable properties were ranked as such due to alterations made over time and/or the masking of their historic facades with more contemporary coverings or materials. Should a development project consider the removal of these false fronts or newer materials, these buildings could warrant reassessment and perhaps be considered for a higher ranking category. At the conclusion of the discussion, both the Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Program staff agreed that this bullet should be modified.

The Planning Commission's motion of support for the Phase 1 HRI Goals and Policy Objectives asked that staff modify Goal 4, bullet 4 to allow more flexibility in using Notable properties for TDR. Staff recommends the following revised language, which is also reflected in the Goals and Policy Objectives presented in the revised Attachment A:

The County will actively promote Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) in exchange for building preservation. However, a TDR received from a historic site listed in the HRI will not be used on a project that proposes the demolition of an Essential or Important resource listed in the HRI. The County will consider whether a TDR could be used in a site plan that involves the demolition of a Notable resource in the HRI.

PHASE 1 HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY (HRI)
GOALS AND POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Phase 1 Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) focuses on the following eight goals and supporting policy objectives. These goals and policy objectives will be used to encourage and promote the preservation and rehabilitation of the historic buildings featured in the Phase 1 HRI list. The HRI goals and policy objectives are intended to ensure that property owners give careful consideration to all of the various options available to them before deciding to demolish their ranked building(s). All of the HRI goals and policy objectives presented here still will allow property owners to pursue by-right rehabilitation or demolition options.

1. STRENGTHEN ARLINGTON’S SENSE OF PLACE BY VALUING HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND THE HUMAN STORIES ASSOCIATED WITH THEM.

- As stated in the *Historic Preservation Master Plan*: “To sustain itself as a successful urban village, Arlington will retain the distinctive character of its many historic neighborhoods and commercial centers and will share the history of Arlington through these resources. This will be accomplished through a combined approach that includes education, programs, incentives, and land use policies that are integrated and balanced with future growth.”¹
- The County will showcase and preserve historic buildings to help define neighborhood character and identity and increase public understanding of our architectural and developmental history.
- Beyond building preservation, the County will conduct research into the people who built and used these historic properties so as not to lose the important stories of how Arlington developed.

2. PROMOTE HISTORIC PRESERVATION AS A VIABLE AND CONTINUING COMMUNITY BENEFIT.

- The County will be strategic in balancing historic preservation with other valuable County initiatives, including affordable housing, sustainability, transportation, and open space planning, among others.
- The County will work collaboratively with property owners on a continuous basis to explain and promote preservation incentives and options.

¹ *Historic Preservation Master Plan*, p.2

3. INCORPORATE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN THE RENOVATION OF ALL EXISTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND IN NEW CONSTRUCTION.

- The County will encourage that existing historic buildings be retained and reused rather than demolished.
- The County will encourage that existing building materials be retained and reused, either on site or made available to other sites in the immediate community or in the greater County.
- The County will encourage the salvage of usable building materials and architectural or stylistic elements/details.
- The County will promote new architectural design that respects the prominent historic architecture of the immediate neighborhood in terms of massing, materials, and architectural style.
- The County will promote that historic buildings and materials be replaced with those that are compatible with neighborhood character.
- The County will encourage the renovation of existing buildings to increase overall energy efficiency without losing building integrity.

4. PROMOTE THE PRESERVATION OF THE ESSENTIAL HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN THE HRI.

- The County will strive to protect all Essential properties and will use all available tools to ensure their continued stewardship and preservation.
- The County will actively collaborate with owners of Essential properties to preserve the buildings' historical and material integrity to the maximum extent possible.
- The County will require that new development proposals affecting all Essential properties be reviewed by the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB).
- The County will actively promote Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) in exchange for building preservation. ~~However, a TDR received from a historic site listed in the HRI will not be used on a project that proposes the demolition of another Essential, Important, or Notable resource in the HRI.~~ However, a TDR received from an historic site listed in the HRI will not be used on a project that proposes the demolition of an Essential or Important resource listed in the HRI. The County will consider whether a TDR could be used in a site plan that involves the demolition of a Notable resource in the HRI.
- The County will appropriately weigh the impact on Essential properties when awarding bonus density to development proposals.
- The County will actively encourage owners of Essential properties to take maximum advantage of available financial incentives (e.g., Federal and state rehabilitation tax credits, preservation easements, County real estate tax exemption for rehabilitation).

- The County will encourage owners of Essential properties to take advantage of available zoning tools (e.g., site plans and use permits, TDR, local historic district designation).
- The County will pursue local historic district designation with all Essential properties where owner consent is present, and will give designation priority to those Essential properties threatened with demolition.

5. PROMOTE THE PRESERVATION OF THE IMPORTANT HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN THE HRI.

- The County will strive to protect and promote the reuse of those properties listed as Important.
- The County will collaborate with owners of Important properties to preserve the buildings' historical and material integrity to the maximum extent possible.
- The County will require that new development proposals affecting Important properties be reviewed by the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB).
- The County will encourage owners of Important properties to take advantage of available financial incentives (e.g., Federal and state rehabilitation tax credits, preservation easements, County real estate tax exemption for rehabilitation).
- The County will encourage owners of Important properties to take advantage of available zoning tools (e.g., site plans and use permits, TDR, local historic district designation).

6. PROMOTE THE PRESERVATION OF THE NOTABLE BUILDINGS IN THE HRI.

- The County will strive to protect and promote the reuse of those properties listed as Notable.
- The County will encourage owners of Notable properties to take advantage of available financial incentives (e.g., Federal and state rehabilitation tax credits, preservation easements, County real estate tax exemption for rehabilitation).
- The County will encourage owners of Notable properties to take advantage of available zoning tools (e.g., site plans and use permits, TDR, local historic district designation).

7. CONTRIBUTE TO THE LASTING HISTORIC RECORD OF THE COUNTY BY DOCUMENTING HISTORIC RESOURCES LISTED IN THE HRI.

- The County will require, through site plan and use permit conditions and coordination with Historic Preservation Program staff, the formal recordation of historic resources ranked as Essential and Important in the HRI prior to any proposed demolition.
- The County will require that Essential buildings proposed to be demolished in whole or in part through the site plan or use permit process will be subject to the most detailed level of historic documentation according to the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) standards (including a research report, measured drawings, and photographs).
- The County will require that Important buildings proposed to be demolished in whole or in part through the site plan or use permit process will be documented by HABS-level photographs.

- The County will encourage whenever possible, through site plan and use permit conditions, basic photographic documentation of historic resources ranked as Notable and Minor in the HRI prior to proposed demolition.
- The Historic Preservation Program office will maintain copies (both hard copy and electronic formats) of all historic documentation materials pertaining to HRI properties.

8. CONTINUALLY INTEGRATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLANNING PRINCIPLES INTO COUNTY POLICIES.

- The County will incorporate the Phase 1 HRI list of ranked historic properties, the HRI Goals and Policy Objectives, and the HRI Tool Kit into current planning efforts, initiatives, and studies.
- The County will integrate the HRI into the County's planning, zoning, and permitting processes.
- The County will conduct biannual reviews of the Phase 1 HRI list in January and July to reflect demolitions, historic designations, identification in new County-adopted plans, or other changes as necessary.
- The County will conduct subsequent phases of the HRI to address the study and protection of additional types of historic resources, and those phases also will be incorporated into current planning efforts, initiatives, and studies.
- The County will explore additional preservation tools and incentives in the future, as staffing and work program requirements allow.