



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING, HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT
Neighborhood Services Division

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Michael Cullen, Principal Planner

Rebecca Ballo, Historic Preservation

FROM: Planner

DATE: December 21, 2017

American Red Cross Site/Whitefield Commons Apartments: HALRB

SUBJECT: Comments

The HALRB heard a presentation from the applicant, their attorney, and architects at its regularly scheduled meeting on December 20, 2017.

The HALRB commented generally that there was not enough contextual information shown about the site—for the exiting garden apartments, the streetscape, or the topography, for them to give constructive feedback regarding architectural impacts of the new construction. The HALRB found that the proposed townhouses were not compatible with the adjacent National Register District, and that the applicant did not do enough work to understand the existing context of the site. The townhouses use an industrial/warehouse vocabulary that is awkwardly juxtaposed with the Colonial Revival vocabulary of the adjacent garden apartment complexes in Buckingham and Whitfield Commons. Gestures to make the townhouses more compatible could include using less glass, using a lighter trim color, or emphasizing the entryways for each unit with the door surrounds.

There was detailed discussion surrounding the proposed stucco in terms of its material properties, substrate, methods of application and finishing, color application, insulation methods and materials, and finishing with a discussion of the location, material, and color of drainage channels.

The HALRB also evaluated the compatibility of the new apartment building vis-à-vis the Whitfield Commons garden apartments. The Board commented that the color palette (dark gray) that is being used on the elevations primarily facing Whitfield Commons is not a compatible choice. There were further comments on the brick palette, detailing, and the scale of windows for each of the elevations.

Historic Preservation staff asked that information be provided for the next review that will give an idea of the context of the new townhouses closest to the westernmost Whitfield Commons building. Staff asked for massing diagrams, renderings, and section drawings that will show both townhouse sticks and Whitfield Commons together. This may show the need for retaining walls or additional landscaping to mediate the grade changes and other alterations to this portion of the site. The applicant agreed to provide this information at the next meeting.

The HALRB requested and the applicant agreed to return for the January 17th HALRB meeting with new drawings for further discussion.