



*Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor*

**COMMISSION FOR
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL
PRESERVATION**

Tom Liebel, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



*Thomas J. Stosur
Director*

April 10, 2018

REQUEST: Construct 2nd and 3rd floor addition and construct 23 townhomes

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions

STAFF: Walter Edward Leon

PETITIONER(S): ARE-2001 Aliceanna Street, LLC

ARCHITECT: Hord Coplan Macht

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

Fells Point Historic District: The site is located on the southeast edge of the Fells Point Historic District. The building is the former American Can factory and warehouse and the adjacent surface parking lot was historically the site of oyster and fruit packing factories and coal and wood yards. The structure and parking lot were determined in 2007 to be non-contributing structures to the Fells Point historic district. Fells Point is significant as one of the original three settlements that merged to form the beginnings of Baltimore City. The area is directly linked to early maritime trade, which was key to Baltimore's growth and development. Besides the significance of Fells Point in the eighteenth century, the community has been a constantly growing and changing urban place. Many of the earliest houses were added onto in the Victorian era creating a unique blend of pre-Revolutionary War and post-Civil War architectural styles and characteristics. Fells Point has been a diverse neighborhood of many ethnic groups, each influencing the growth and development of the area throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many of the later structures are of architectural significance and are consistent with the waterfront character of Fells Point, even if stylistically different. Recreation Pier is an example of this type of significant structure in Fells Point.

Site Conditions: The property at 2001 Aliceanna Street consists of the warehouse and addition that sits along Wolfe Street, behind the properties on Aliceanna Street and directly abuts the water line of the Baltimore Harbor. The parking lot area in the 2000 block was cleared of any structures sometime between 1972 and designation of the local historic district in . The building most recently has been used by the National Aquarium. Prior site uses have included oyster and fruit packing facilities that were demolished for the construction of the current concrete warehouse and the later rear addition.

BACKGROUND

This concept proposal was reviewed and received conceptual approval at the December 2017 CHAP hearing. At that Hearing, the conceptual approval was granted with amended recommendations: 1) further study the activation of Wolfe Street, and 2) approve revised townhouse scheme [site plan] that was presented at the 12/12/17 hearing.

PROPOSAL

The applicants propose to construct 23 new condo/townhomes on the parking lot located between Aliceanna Street to the north, and the public waterfront promenade to the south. Some units will have built-in garages, especially due to the flood plain conditions that are possible along the water's edge. Other units will have allotted parking spaces within the existing warehouse. Units will have frontages along the waterfront, Aliceanna Street and facing eastwards towards a pedestrian promenade portion of Chester Street that allows access to the waterfront promenade from Aliceanna Street.

The existing warehouse will be retained and the interior 2 floors will be converted into parking. The warehouse will have three levels of residential units built above, set back on the Wolfe Street elevation and rear of the Aliceanna Street fronting portion of the warehouse. The height of the proposal is within the existing allowed zoning. This portion of the development will have approximately 275 units within the new three stories being proposed. The applicant proposes to also remove a non-contributing addition along the eastern end of the warehouse and along Lancaster Street.

The plan proposes to construct additional condo/townhome units with a main courtyard that faces the Chester St. pedestrian promenade, which the applicants propose to improve in coordination with the Department of Transportation. The northern portion of the existing parking lot will have a new amenities structure that faces Aliceanna Street and ties directly to the new residential units that face the waterfront. The southern elevation of the warehouse will have entrances for tenants, a bike shop, bike storage, a fitness center, and a trash room. Improvements along Lancaster Street are also a part of the proposal. On-site parking will be through an existing opening on the north elevation where train transports had originally accessed the warehouse along Aliceanna Street.

APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

The staff applied relevant portions of *Chapter 2: Design Guidelines for Additions, New Construction, and Non-Contributing Buildings*

2.1 Guiding Principles for New Design

Identify the character defining features of the surrounding historic buildings and streetscape. Design new buildings to visually relate to the historic environment. Respect the established design precedent in the immediate area.

Contemporary architectural design that reflects its current time, place, use, and culture is accepted, provided the design is compatible with the character of the historic district. Radically contrasting building designs are discouraged within local historic districts.

New buildings that are similar to existing buildings in materials, form, massing, and architectural features are accepted as long as the new buildings can be distinguished from historic buildings.

2.2 Site Design

Retain established property line patterns, street and alley widths, setbacks, primary and secondary building orientation, and landscape elements.

Incorporate character-defining site design features of the historic district into the designs of new construction projects.

The spaces between buildings help define the historic character of the neighborhood. Design new construction to follow the existing pattern of building widths and spacing between buildings.

Primary buildings should have a similar orientation and relationship to the street as the existing buildings. Primary entrances and facades should be located, oriented, and sequenced to be consistent with the pattern of entrances and facades in the neighborhood.

New construction projects should reinforce existing patterns of open space and enclosure created by existing vehicular and pedestrian circulation routes, fences, walls, yards, courtyards, gardens, and landscaping.

New construction at corners or abutting public spaces require special consideration in the design of entrances and multiple, publicly visible facades.

2.3 Scale and Form

The scale and form of new buildings must be compatible with the height and depth of surrounding buildings. Where there is variation of building height within the immediate neighborhood, the new building should generally relate to the predominant pattern.

New buildings must complement the massing of surrounding buildings, including the proportion of solid surfaces (walls) to voids (window and door openings.) Respect the characteristic rhythm (fenestration, bays, rooflines, etc.) of existing buildings.

Design the new building to be proportional to surrounding buildings. Consider important building proportions such as floor-to-floor heights, the size and placement of windows and doors, the scale of articulated elements such as porches, overhanging cornices, and bay windows.

Design rooflines to be compatible with those found on surrounding buildings.

Staff also applied the *Baltimore City Design Guidelines Chapter 5: Guidelines for Archeology*, and considered the archaeological potential of these parcels.

ANALYSIS

The proposed elevation designs for the addition meet the CHAP Guidelines for New Additions to a non-historic structure. The elevations are contemporary in fenestration, design and materials.

The proposed elevation designs for the amenities and remaining attached residential units meet the CHAP Guidelines for New Construction .

The remaining condo/townhome units that are situated in the existing parking lot area are appropriate in proposed design, window fenestration, and material.

Archeological Potential -- As there will be extensive excavation for this project, staff conducted a review of archeological potential. Staff focused on the parcels in the 2000 block of Aliceanna Street that currently serve as a parking lot. It is common in urban contexts for surface parking lots to be installed directly on top of the remains of historic structures and intact subsurface archaeological deposits, such as trash pits, privies, etc. After reviewing historic maps and aerial photographs, staff has determined that there is sufficient evidence for archaeological potential. Historic maps indicate that the parking lot property is man-made land, built up between 1804 and 1851. Additionally, maps and photographs from the 20th century show that the property was home to several oyster and fruit packing companies, most notably D.E. Foote & Co., a prominent firm that was located on the parcel for over 50 years. Their circa 1914 factory building was demolished sometime during the late 20th century.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

The Fell Point Design Review Committee and the Fells Point Task Force were notified of this proposal. The DRC has reviewed the proposal and has given in-depth comments. (See attached)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with conditions

- Examine a masonry framing extension on the southwest corner of the warehouse building and examine the use of more masonry material consistently along the façade fronts of the townhome structures.
- The applicant obtains a registered professional archaeologist to conduct a Phase 1 archaeological survey and make recommendations on further archaeological investigations, which will be considered by the full commission.
- Final design to return to the full Commission.

Eric L. Holcomb
Executive Director

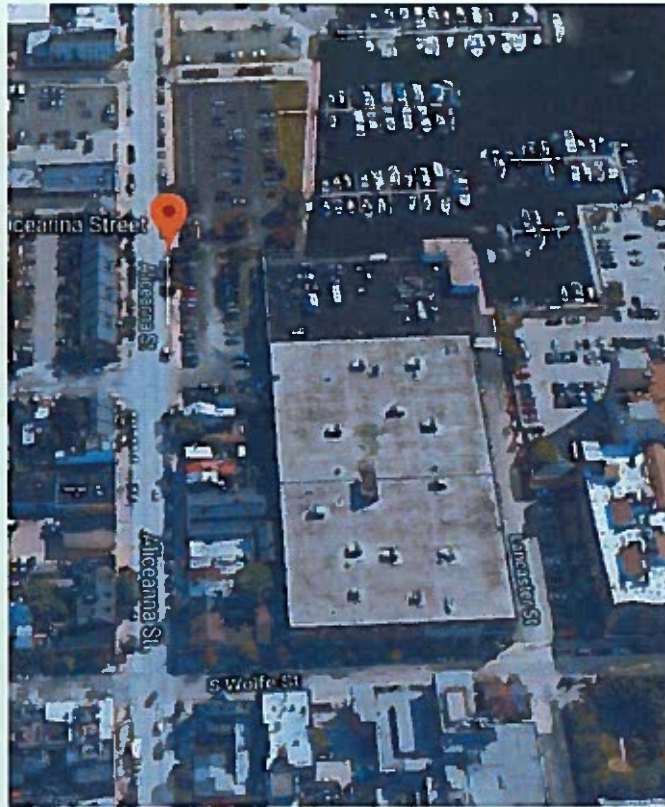
Aerial View



View from South



View from West



View from North



View from the East

