



Memorandum

To: Vienna Town Council
From: Patty Hanley, Chair of the Board of Architectural Review *P. Hanley*
Meeting Date: October 17, 2024
Re: Recommendation regarding the proposed landscape plan for the library and parking garage to be located at 101 Maple Avenue East

Overview

The matter pertains to the proposed landscape plans for the new library and parking garage located at 101 Maple Avenue East. No members of the public attended the meeting or submitted written comments about this matter.

Role of the Board of Architectural Review (BAR)

At the regular BAR meeting on October 17, 2024, the BAR reviewed and recommended approval to the Town Council of the landscape plan for the Vienna-Carter Library and parking garage for case PR-1125258-BAR per the Town Code Chapter 4, and as required of properties zoned C-2 by Section 18-90 of the previous zoning code that was in effect when this application was submitted in 2023.

In addition to reviewing the landscape plans, the BAR reviewed and approved the architecture and exterior modifications.

BAR Discussion

General Plantings

The BAR was impressed with the cohesive approach to landscape design in the courtyard and plantings abutting the building. Great care was taken in material selection and location to achieve cohesion with the approved streetscape plan for Maple Avenue. The BAR is happy with the plan as presented as it relates to the on-site plantings.

Planters along Maple

The BAR had questions about the gap in the planters in front of the library entrance. They discussed elongating the planters along 123 to restrict/discourage pedestrian crossings in front of the library. The existing library has no breaks along the planters, even at the entrance. Breaks should only be considered for streetscape details such as fire hydrants, bike racks, trash cans, bus stops, and controlled crosswalks. Street trees should be placed appropriately in the planters to enhance the visibility of signage and entrance.

Landscape Management

While the BAR recognizes that the area on the Vienna Elementary School property is a separate property, the impact of this development is significant to the subject property and aesthetics on a prominent street in Vienna. The BAR is particularly concerned with the condition of the area between Vienna Elementary and the new garage. There are many invasive vines, honeysuckle, and ivies in the area; most trees proposed to be saved are nuisance trees in poor health. Planting trees without proper removal of these conditions is hopeful at best and most likely wasteful.

Because this area is relatively small and contained on all sides by development, it presents an opportunity for a landscape management agreement between the two properties, which should include performing intensive invasive removal and planting trees to achieve landscaping aesthetics for the proposed new library. With some sort of turf/forest management agreement between the property owners, all newly planted and existing healthy trees will benefit. The BAR would appreciate further discussion with the Town Arborist and/or Urban Forester to evaluate invasive plants and deteriorated trees in this off-site area.

Additional Off-Site Landscaping on Vienna Elementary School property

This project is removing approximately 19 existing trees on the Vienna Elementary School property. The BAR contemplated the need for additional landscaping at the rear corner of the garage abutting Center Street. During our initial work sessions, we were led to believe that this would not be visible from the street. Currently, a portion of the rear of the building will be visible from Center Street, and only lawn is proposed. This approach would be abrupt as you come down Center Street. We would suggest an evergreen screen along the rear wall of the building with a layer in front including understory trees and/or shrubs. This would only be successful through an MOU between the library and school.

Commemorative Bricks

The applicant and BAR discussed the reclaiming and reusing of the bricks previously purchased by town residents that are currently in the sidewalk in front of the library. The Board wanted to

confirm that the applicant will document how these bricks are incorporated into the project in a visually prominent way and explain how any bricks damaged during the process are handled.

BAR Action

The BAR made a motion to recommend that the Town Council approve the landscape plan subject to the following provisions:

- The applicant continues to work with the Fairfax County Public Schools to have the invasive species cleared from the area at the rear of the building and remove diseased trees that would jeopardize the health of the new plantings.
- The applicant continues to work with the urban forester on the selection of appropriate trees and other greenery/bushes for the area to help shield the view of the rear area from Center Street.

Motion: John O'Keefe

2nd: Nate Penati

Vote: 5-0

BAR Chair Note

While the BAR recognizes that the MOU between the library and school is not part of the Board's purview, we highly recommend it for the project's success and the betterment of the Town. We ask that the Council consider this as part of their deliberations regarding the requested modifications of requirements for this project.