



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of July 19, 2008**

**DATE:** July 9, 2008

**SUBJECT:** “On the County Board’s Own Motion” a site plan amendment for the “AHC Building” portion of Site Plan #401 consistent with Condition #79 of Site Plan #401, for premises known as 801 North Wakefield Street (RPC #14-053-002).

**APPLICANT:**

AHC Inc.  
2230 N. Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the site plan amendment, subject to revised Conditions #1, #15, and #52, new Condition #90, and to all previous conditions.

**ISSUE:** This site plan amendment is consistent with conceptual approval of the AHC building phase of this site plan and further refines the conceptual design to be consistent with County goals and standards for site plans and with specific concerns for the subject site. At its July 7, 2008 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended changing the building’s brick color and considering a roof garden, neither of which were raised during site plan review, and neither of which staff supports at this time due to lack of opportunity for public review.

**SUMMARY:** The applicant has requested a major site plan amendment for the final design of the subject building, as provided for in Condition #79 of Site Plan #401 approved in February 2008. This building is the affordable housing component of the Peck/Staples/AHC site plan, whose major community benefit was approved as land area, bonus density to accommodate the proposed units, and a nearly \$6 million contribution toward construction of the affordable housing. The proposed residential building meets the five requirements stated in the conceptual approval for this building, as approved as part of the overall site plan. Additionally, the applicant has addressed several concerns that were raised by staff and during site plan review. The proposal is consistent with County goals and design expectations for site plans and with

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

County Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: Lisa Maher, Planning Division, DCPHD  
Jennifer Fioretti, Division of Transportation, DES

PLA-5033

specific aspects of the subject site. Therefore, staff recommends that the County Board approve the site plan amendment, subject to revised Conditions #1, #15, and #52, new Condition #90, and to all previous conditions.

**BACKGROUND:** The County Board approved the Peck/Staples/Jordan Manor site plan (SP #401) on February 23, 2008. This site plan was originally filed for the Peck/Staples block only, on the north side of Wilson Boulevard between Glebe Road and North Wakefield Street. County staff worked with the applicant and AHC to incorporate AHC’s Jordan Manor site on the west side of North Wakefield Street and to revise the site plan to design an apartment building for affordable housing on a portion of the original site. Since the affordable housing component was added to the site plan several months after the application was filed, the building design lagged behind the rest of the site plan. The County Board approved the entire site plan with conceptual approval of this building to contain:

1. Maximum of 90 affordable apartment units;
2. Maximum height of 50 feet to main roof from average site elevation;
3. Parking ratio from 0.7 to 1.0 spaces/unit, at the discretion of the developer of this building;
4. Footprint approximately as shown on the plans dated February 6, 2008;
5. Additional features including ground floor residential unit entrances facing Wilson Boulevard and North Wakefield Street and primarily masonry facades on all sides of the building.

The site plan approval requires the details of this building to be approved by the County Board as a major site plan amendment.

**The following provides additional information about the site and location:**

Site: The “AHC Building” portion of the site plan is an approximately 47,867 s.f. (1.1 acres) area at the northeast corner of Wilson Boulevard and North Wakefield Street. The entire site plan is 210,167 s.f. (4.82 acres). The AHC Building site is surrounded on the north, east, and west by other phases of the site plan. The existing development in those phases, a Staples big box store, a car dealer, and two single family houses east of North Wakefield Street, and a 21-unit apartment building with triplex unit west of North Wakefield Street, have recently been, or will soon be, demolished.

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|---------------|---|
| To the north: | Vacant— approved for nine townhouses  |
| To the west:  | 21-unit apartment building and single family houses to be replaced with 19 townhouses |
| To the east:  | Vacant—approved for 10-story office building  |
| To the south: | Funeral home and parking lot.   |

Zoning: “C-O-2.5” Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Apartment District.

General Land Use Plan Designation: “Medium” Office-Apartment-Hotel with Note 23 to specify that buildings in the southwestern and western portion of the site shall consist of residential uses and have maximum heights of 50 feet.

Neighborhood: Bluemont Civic Association.

**Proposed Development:** The table below sets forth the preliminary statistical summary for the proposed development:

	Approved	Proposed
Total Site Area	210,264 square feet (4.83 acres)	210,264 square feet (4.83 acres)
AHC Building		47,867 s.f. (1.10 acres)
Density		
Total GFA	Approximately 90,000 s.f.	97,644 s.f.
Units	90	90
Average Site Elevation	265.77 ft. ASL	265.77 ft. ASL
Building Height		
Main Roof Elevation	310.77 ft. ASL	312.67 ft. ASL
Main Roof Height	45 ft.	46.9 ft.
Stories	4	4
Penthouse Roof Elevation		321.33 ft. ASL
Penthouse Roof Height		55.56 ft.
Parking	64-90 spaces	77 spaces
Parking Ratio	0.7 -1.0 spaces/unit	0.86 spaces/unit
Compact Parking	11 spaces	5 spaces
Compact Parking Ratio	12.2%	6.5%
EarthCraft Score	200	230

Density and Uses: The proposed uses and density are consistent with the conceptual approval. AHC proposes 90 affordable residential units as approved, and 77 parking spaces (0.86 spaces/unit), which falls within the 0.7 and 1.0 spaces/unit range approved by the County Board.

Site and Design: The proposed building is consistent with the conceptual approval in terms of footprint and height, within which the applicant has designed 97,644 square feet of gross floor area, compared to the approximation of 90,000 square feet in the conceptual approval. This difference arises from more detailed design than was shown in the conceptual approval. The only massing change from the conceptual drawing is an increase in building height from 45 to 46.9 feet above the average site elevation, which is 265.77 feet above sea level. The project's conceptual approval permitted a building height up to 50 feet above the average site elevation of the entire east block of the site plan. Since the actual grade surrounding the building ranges from approximately 267-272 feet above sea level, the building would appear to be approximately 41-46 feet high along Wilson Boulevard and North Wakefield Street.

The "U" shaped building would be four stories and faced mostly with brick, and with metal panel bays, as shown during SPRC meetings for the overall Peck/Staples/Jordan Manor site plan. Most ground floor residential units facing Wilson Boulevard and North Wakefield Street would have direct entrances to the street. The main building entrance would be at the south end of North Wakefield Street, accessing a lobby at the corner of Wilson Boulevard. A secondary building entrance is on the north side of the building to the new block of Ninth Street North, and there would also be two access points from the building to the courtyard. The applicant would provide a private courtyard for use of the tenants inside the "U". This courtyard would be elevated several feet above the adjacent walkway to the east between this building and approved Office Building A, as originally approved. The applicant has analyzed the needs for this space since the original site plan approval and has proposed a revised design. Loading and parking access would be from Ninth Street North, in the locations originally approved. The conceptual approval included the applicant's discretion to provide between 0.7 and 1.0 parking spaces per unit. The site plan proposal includes 77 spaces, which is 0.86 spaces per unit, within the approved range.

**DISCUSSION:** The site plan amendment proposal meets all the parameters of the original approval. While staff recommended, and the County Board approved, a parking ratio as low as 0.7 spaces per unit at the developer's discretion, staff further recommends new language in site plan Condition #52 (Parking Management Plan) to require 1) that parking spaces in the AHC building not be assigned to individual tenants, to create additional efficiency in use of the garage, and 2) that parking spaces are to be rented separately from the units, in order not to encourage vehicle ownership simply because a parking space comes with a particular unit.

Issues identified during site plan review included mainly architectural treatment of blank walls, rooftop treatments, vent locations, loading and parking garage doors, and accessibility issues. These items have been addressed as follows:

- **Windows:** Additional windows have been added on the east side of the building, facing approved Office Building A. The applicant has revised the façade treatment on the north side of the building to provide visual interest in a section of blank wall that does not look like bricked-in windows, as requested in site plan review meetings. Staff supports this treatment.

- **Rooftop Treatments:** The applicant has proposed using a consistent hardiplank-type material to face the penthouses and mechanical screening wall to match the tan brick color of the top floor of the building. This treatment is consistent with that on similar buildings. The roof of this building will be visible to occupants and office tenants of the two office buildings on the site and to future occupants of redevelopment south of Wilson Boulevard. The applicant has identified a rooftop material that meets required standards of the EarthCraft rating system to be used by the applicant and that can be installed in a decorative pattern, as shown on the plans dated July 1, 2008.
- **Ventilation Grates:** The proposed building brings all ventilation to the building roof, so that no vents would be located on the building facades. The only possibly visible vent is in the rear of the building, facing Office Building A, that is a shared exhaust for the two garages and was approved as part of the overall site plan. This vent will not be visible from public streets and will be screened from view by landscape plantings.
- **Loading and Parking Garage Doors:** The overall site plan includes language in Condition #34 requiring decorative treatment of loading and parking garage doors. The proposed building includes decorative parking and loading doors with metal frames and translucent polycarbonate panels, which meets the intent of the site plan condition.
- **Accessibility:** The applicant proposes to provide four (4) fully accessible units with roll-in showers. Of these, one unit will be further enhanced to provide accommodations for residents with auditory and/or visual impairments. This commitment represents 4.4 percent of the units in this building and is acceptable to staff. In addition, Condition #83 of the overall site plan requires electric eye/proximity sensor door openers at the main residential entrance and automatic door openers at doors to the elevator lobby in the parking garage. Different possible mechanisms for these door openers were discussed during site plan review. However, the applicant has agreed to install automatic doors with an electric eye sensor, consistent with the approved condition.

New and Revised Site Plan Conditions: This site plan amendment is subject to the conditions approved for the overall site plan, which take into account specific elements of this phase of the project, such as its EarthCraft commitment and streetscape requirements. Staff recommends the following new and revised conditions:

- Revised Condition #1 to include references to the final drawings for the AHC site and building;
- Revised Condition #15 to provide for plant heights that reach to below the first floor windows along Ninth Street North;
- Revised Condition #52 to separate parking rentals from unit rentals and to prohibit reserved parking in the garage;
- New Condition #90 memorializing the applicant's commitment to provide accessible units as described above.

**Community Process:** The Site Plan Review Committee reviewed this proposal twice. Earlier versions had been shown at SPRC meetings, and to the community, during review of the overall site plan. The Housing Commission had supported the affordable housing plan and the tenant

relocation plan at the time of public hearings for the overall site plan. The Transportation Commission, likewise, reviewed transportation aspects of the overall site plan in general, and for the AHC building in particular, during review of the overall site plan. The Transportation Commission did not choose to review this site plan amendment, since it included no transportation-related changes from the overall site plan.

**Planning Commission Recommendation:** The Planning Commission heard this site plan amendment at its meeting on July 7, 2008. The Commission voted 9-0 to recommend approval of the site plan amendment with the additional recommendations that 1) The County Board look at, if not this project, future projects of a similar nature for rooftop gardens; 2) the applicant use a redder/browner hue of brick, instead of the orange shown on the color renderings, in harmony with the existing residential neighborhoods to the west and south of the site, and 3) the landscaping along Ninth Street North include plantings that reach a mature height at the cast stone band labeled “watertable” on the plans dated July 1, 2008.

Staff supports the concept of rooftop gardens generally but does not recommend that one be added to this site plan. This is a low building that is acting as a transition between a highrise office building to the east and townhouses and single family houses to the west and south. The building height on this site was a significant concern during review of the overall site plan, and structures to support tenant access to the roof would require significantly increased height for ADA compliance. This option was not raised or discussed during site plan review, and neither the community nor the applicant has had the opportunity to evaluate the implications of a roof garden. Staff does not support the change in brick color. This also was not raised as an issue during the public review of the site plan amendment, and a change in that brick color could affect the color choices of other façade materials. While there are nearby townhouse projects that are exclusively red brick, most are not immediately adjacent to this site, and a color very similar to the proposed brick is used in some units of at least one of the five nearby townhouse developments. In addition, a change in building color would change the overall look of the building but would not have been vetted in a public review process. Staff supports the landscaping recommendation to the extent that plants of that size can be accommodated within the available soil depth, and has added this provision to Condition #15 regarding the final landscape plan.

**CONCLUSION:** The AHC Building portion of Site Plan #401, a 90-unit all affordable residential building, represents the major community benefit for the entire site plan. The site plan amendment proposal meets all the parameters of the original conceptual approval for the AHC building. The applicant has addressed additional details of the project design that are consistent with expectations for other site plans. Therefore, staff recommends that the County Board approve the site plan amendment for the AHC Building subject to revised Conditions #1, #15, and #52, new Condition #90, and to all previous conditions.

## **New and Revised Conditions:**

### **1. Site Plan Term**

The developer (as used in these conditions, the term “developer” shall mean the owner, the applicant and all successors and assigns) agrees to comply with the standard conditions set forth below and as referenced in Administrative Regulation 4.1 and the revised plans dated February 6, 2008 and reviewed and approved by the County Board and made a part of the public record on February 23, 2008, and the plans for the AHC Building as defined below, dated July 1, 2008, and reviewed and approved by the County Board and made part of the public record on July 19, 2008, including all renderings, drawings, and presentation boards presented during public hearings, together with any modifications proposed by the developer and accepted by the County Board or vice versa. The project consists of the following components, as shown on the subdivision plan titled “Site Plan Phases” and dated February 6, 2008: “Office Building A”, located at the corner of Glebe Road and Wilson Boulevard; “Office Building B”, located to the north of new 9<sup>th</sup> Street North; the “AHC Building”, located on the east side of North Wakefield Street between Wilson Boulevard and new 9<sup>th</sup> Street North; the “Wakefield Street Townhouses”, located on the east side of North Wakefield Street, north of new 9<sup>th</sup> Street North; and the “Jordan Manor Townhouses”, located on the north side of Wilson Boulevard between North Wakefield Street and North Woodrow Street. The Wakefield Street Townhouses and Jordan Manor Townhouses may be collectively referred to as “the Townhouses”.

Unless otherwise vested, this site plan approval expires three (3) years after the date of County Board approval if a building permit has not been issued for the first building to be constructed pursuant to the approved plan. Extension of this approval shall be at the sole discretion of the County Board. The owner agrees that this discretion shall include a review of this site plan and its conditions for their compliance with then current County policies for land use, zoning and special exception uses. Extension of the site plan is subject to, among other things, inclusion of amended or additional site plan conditions necessary to bring the plan into compliance with then current County policies and standards together with any modifications proposed by the owner and accepted by the County Board or vice versa.

### **15. Coordination of these plans: final site development, landscape and site engineering**

The developer agrees to attach the County Board meeting minutes outlining the approved conditions and the conditions themselves to each set of Building Permit drawings that they submit to the County. The developer agrees to submit to the Zoning Administrator and obtain approval from the County Manager a detailed final landscape plan prior to issuance of the Excavation/Sheeting and Shoring Permit. The final landscape plan shall be submitted at a scale of 1 inch = 25 feet, in conjunction with the final civil engineering plan as required in Condition #18 below, as well as a vicinity map with major streets labeled. The final landscape plan shall be developed by, and display the professional seal of, a landscape architect certified to practice in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The

developer further agrees that the final landscape plan and the final civil engineering plan shall verify, by means of survey, that there are no conflicts between the street trees and utilities. The developer shall obtain approval by the County Manager for both plans as meeting all requirements of the County Board's site plan approval and all applicable county laws and plans before the issuance of the Excavation/Sheeting and Shoring Permit. The plan shall be consistent with the conceptual landscape plan approved as a part of the site plan, with the landscaping along Ninth Street North to include plantings that reach a mature height at the cast stone band labeled "watertable" on the plans dated July 1, 2008, to the extent that plants of that height can be accommodated within the available soil depth, and, at a minimum, shall conform to: the landscaping requirements in Conditions #16 and 21 below; the *Arlington County Streetscape Standards* if applicable; the Sector Plans if applicable; the County's landscaping, planting, and sidewalk and driveway construction specifications; and/or other applicable urban design standards approved by the County Board. In order to facilitate comparison with the final civil engineering plan, the landscape plan shall be at a scale of 1 inch = 25 feet; the County may require more detailed plans appropriate to landscape installation at a larger scale to also be submitted. The County may permit minor changes in building, street and driveway locations and other details of design as necessitated by more detailed planning and engineering studies if such changes are consistent with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance governing administrative approval and with the intent of the site plan approval. The landscape plan shall include a Street Tree Plan which shall be reviewed by DPRCR and DCPHD, and shall be accompanied by the civil engineering plan. The installation of all plant materials shown on the final landscape plan shall take place before the issuance of the first Certificate of Occupancy for the respective phase of construction, or at an appropriate time based on the planting season and the availability of planting materials as determined by the DPRCR Urban Forester and DCPHD. The final landscape plan shall include the following details:

*\*the remainder of Condition #15 not printed here\**

### **Residential Parking and Parking Management Plan**

52. The intent of this condition is to ensure that at least one parking space is available in perpetuity for parking use by each residential unit in the project (not including the townhouses), except as approved for the AHC Building. Accordingly, the developer agrees to offer the use, for rental units, and the purchase or use for condominium units, of at least one parking space for each dwelling unit.

Further, for condominium units, the developer agrees to notify the Zoning Administrator at the time of the settlement of the last dwelling unit. If excess parking spaces are available at the time of settlement of the last dwelling unit, the number of excess parking spaces equaling the number of dwelling units which were sold without a parking space, shall first be offered exclusively for a period of twelve (12) months to the owners of those dwelling units which were sold without a parking space. Any other remaining spaces shall be offered to all dwelling unit owners or transferred to the condominium, cooperative or homeowners association. By the end of twenty four (24) months



following the settlement of the last dwelling unit, the developer agrees to relinquish in writing to the condominium, cooperative or homeowners association any and all remaining interest in the parking spaces or garage and a copy shall be filed with the Zoning Administrator. The future purchase of any parking spaces shall be limited to the dwelling unit owners or condominium, cooperative or homeowners association of the building.

For both rental and condominium buildings, the use of the parking spaces shall be limited to parking use by the residents of the building and their guests, unless otherwise permitted by the Zoning Ordinance, and shall not be converted to storage or other use without approval of a site plan amendment.

The developer agrees to submit to the Zoning Administrator individual parking management plans for the AHC Building and for the Townhouses, which outlines how guest and visitor parking for each residential use will be provided, where the parking will be located and how guests and visitors will be directed to the parking spaces. For the AHC Building, the developer agrees that parking spaces shall be rented separately from the residential units, and parking spaces shall not be assigned or reserved for specific tenants. Each parking management plan shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator, and reviewed and approved by the County Manager, prior to the issuance of the first Certificate of Occupancy for the respective residential phase.

90. The developer agrees to construct, and maintain for the life of the site plan, a minimum of four (4) residential units in the AHC Building as Type A accessible dwelling units per American National Standards Institute (ANSI) guidelines, and additionally provided with roll-in showers. Further, the developer agrees that one (1) of these units will be constructed with accessible communication features for visual and audio impairments.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

January 26, 2008

Deferred a General Land Use Plan amendment east of North Wakefield Street from Service Commercial to “Medium” Office-Apartment-Hotel, a rezoning from “C-2”, “RA8-18”, and “R-5” to “C-O-2.5” and “RA8-18”, and a site plan for approximately 415,816 s.f. office, approximately 36,241 s.f. retail, 28 townhouses, and 90 apartment units to February 23, 2008.

February 23, 2008

Approved a General Land Use Plan amendment east of North Wakefield Street from Service Commercial to “Medium” Office-Apartment-Hotel, a rezoning from “C-2”, “RA8-18”, and “R-5” to “C-O-2.5” and “RA8-18”, and a site plan for approximately 415,816 s.f. office, approximately 36,241 s.f. retail, 28 townhouses, and 90 apartment units.

June 24, 2008

Authorized advertisement “on the County Board’s Own Motion” of public hearings to consider a site plan amendment for the “AHC Building” consistent with Condition #79.