



**STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Chairman and Members of the Board of Architectural Review  
**FROM:** Department of Community Development  
**RE:** CDA13-11 Vineyard Square  
**DATE:** November 15, 2013

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Name: Vineyard Square Location: Southeast corner of N 21<sup>st</sup> Street and East O Street  
Project: N/A Tax Map Number: /35A1/220///3/; /35A1/220///3A;  
/35A1/220///4/; /35A1/220///5/  
Address: 130-148A N 21<sup>st</sup> Street &  
151 East O Street Loudoun County PIN: 488-37-5267; 488-37-6460; 488-37-  
5457; 488-37-7354  
Located in the Historic District? Yes Contributing Structure? N/A  
Zoning District: C-4/HC Conformity: N/A

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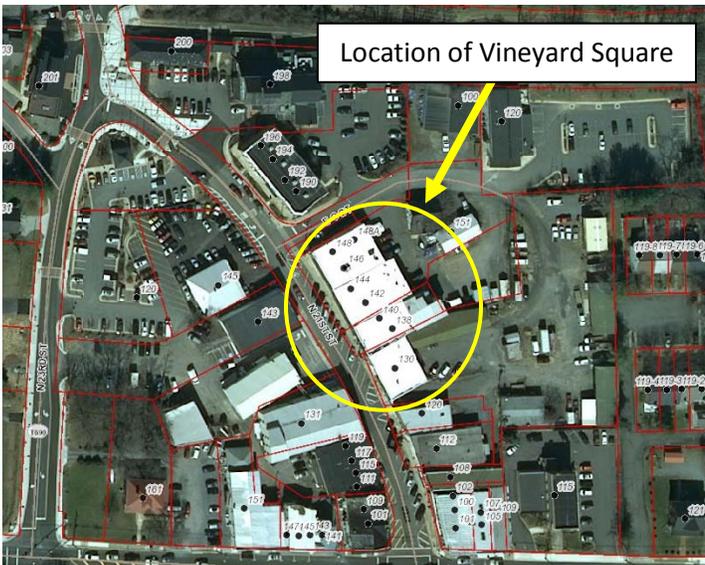
Comments: Application for 5-6 story, mixed-use building containing residences and retail in Old Town; requires the demolition of 130-148A N 21st Street & 151 E O Street.

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The application is evaluated under the C-4 Central Commercial District regulations (see Article 4, Section 9 in the Zoning Ordinance), Design Criteria of the Historic Corridor Overlay District (see Article 14A, Section 8.1 in the Zoning Ordinance) and the Purcellville Design Guidelines (Guidelines).

**BACKGROUND**

Martinsburg Plaza, LLC and Chapman Brothers, LLC have submitted an application requesting design approval of a proposed 5-6 story, mixed-use building containing residences and retail in Old Town at the southeast corner of North 21<sup>st</sup> Street and East O Street. The building would consist of a single-story of retail commercial along approximately half of the North 21<sup>st</sup> Street frontage before rising to 5 stories (at a height of approximately 59.5 feet from 21<sup>st</sup> Street) as it approaches East O Street. Along the East O Street frontage, the building would maintain the same height but add an additional story due to a change in elevation as the site slopes away from North 21<sup>st</sup> Street (resulting in a height of approximately 69.5 feet from the base of the east façade). Along the east



façade, the building would revert to 5 stories (at a height of approximately 59 feet from the base of the east façade). Details on materials and colors can be found on the attached elevations. (Members, please note that these elevations are slightly different from the full-size drawings delivered last week.)

The remainder of the site would be comprised of parking. A surface lot on the east side of the properties would provide parking for the retail uses and other visitors. Reserved parking for residents of Vineyard Square would be contained on the bottom floor of the building with ingress and egress points on the east side of the building. Both parking areas would be accessed from East O Street.

As currently proposed, Vineyard Square would require the demolition of the buildings containing 130-148A North 21st Street and 151 East O Street as well as their accessory structures (CDA13-12 through CDA13-22).

**ZONING ANALYSIS: C-4**

**LAND USES**

*The proposed uses of retail sales and apartments within the upper stories of a building containing commercial uses are both permitted uses in the C-4 District.*

**LOT SIZE STANDARDS**

*None in C-4.*

**YARD AND SETBACK STANDARDS**

*Maximum front yard can be no greater than 15 feet except that permitted outdoor public use spaces such as outdoor café seating are exempt from this requirement. According to the submitted site plan, most of the building would be set back further than 15 feet from the property lines and 21<sup>st</sup> street. Some or all of this may be due to outdoor public use spaces being proposed; this will be handled by staff if/when a formal site plan is submitted for approval.*

**HEIGHT STANDARDS**

*Because the zoning ordinance definition for building height allows the height to be measured from the average level of the finished grade at the front building line (in this case, North 21<sup>st</sup> Street), the submitted proposal (except for perhaps the gambrel-style roof at the northeast corner) meets all of the following requirements:*

1. For properties in common ownership that exceed an aggregate of two contiguous acres in size and that abut North 21st Street, the building height may be up to 35 feet in height, and up to 50 percent of the width of the front façade may be up to 65 feet in height.
2. For adjacent properties in common ownership that exceed an aggregate of two contiguous acres in size located in the C-4 district that abut East "O" Street, the maximum building height is 65 feet.

**ZONING ANALYSIS: HISTORIC CORRIDOR OVERLAY**

**DESIGN CRITERIA**

The board and, on appeal, the town council shall use the following standards and criteria in considering applications other than demolitions filed under this article:

- (1) Whether or not the proposed architectural design is suitable for Purcellville's historic small town character in terms of external architectural features, including signs subject to public view, general design and arrangement, texture, color, line, mass, dimension, material and lighting.

*The proposal utilizes many of the design elements found elsewhere in Town. This is further analyzed in the Guidelines Analysis below.*

- (2) Whether or not the proposed structure, building or improvement is compatible with existing well-designed structures, acceptable to the board, in the vicinity and in the town as a whole.

*Many of the materials and design elements are compatible with existing structures, but if constructed, this would undoubtedly become the tallest building in town, as allowed by the maximum height standards of the C-4 district.*

- (3) Whether or not, and to what extent, the proposed structure, building or improvement would promote the general welfare and protect the public health, safety and morals by tending to maintain or augment the town's tax base as a whole, generating business activity, maintaining and creating employment opportunity, preserving historical sites and structures and making the town a more attractive and desirable place in which to live.

*The proposed building would likely augment the town's tax base by increasing the density on this site. The increased population living in the new residences would likely generate business activity. In the short term, existing businesses located on this site would have to move, but in the long term, it is likely that this proposal would maintain and hopefully create employment opportunities. This proposal would not preserve historical sites and structures, for all historical structures on this site are proposed for demolition in order to accommodate Vineyard Square. Finally, whether the proposed building would make the town a more attractive and desirable place to live is a question of personal preference; however, the building would offer a type of housing which is not currently available in Purcellville.*

- (4) Whether or not proposed buildings use the same or architecturally harmonious materials, color, texture and treatment for all exterior walls.

*Materials, colors, textures and treatments vary throughout the project, and this submission is more harmonious than the original design discussed last month. However, the Board noted previously that the building should be more homogenous, and while some efforts have been made in this area, the proposed design still attempts to appear as if it is composed of 6 or more different buildings on the west, north and east façades.*

- (5) Whether or not the combination of architectural elements proposed for a structure, building or improvement, in terms of design, line, massing, scale, proportion, dimension, color, material, texture, lighting, landscaping and roofline and height conform to accepted architectural principles for permanent buildings as contrasted with engineering standards designed to satisfy safety requirements only; and exhibit external characteristics of demonstrated architecture and aesthetic durability and quality.

*Vineyard Square's design incorporates architectural characteristics rather than engineering standards.*

- (6) Whether or not, in terms of design, material, texture, color, lighting, landscaping, dimension, line, massing, scale, proportion, roof line and height, the proposed structure, building or improvement is designed to serve primarily as an advertisement or commercial display, exhibits exterior characteristics likely to deteriorate rapidly, would be of temporary or short-term architectural or aesthetic acceptability, would be plainly offensive to human sensibilities or would otherwise constitute a reasonable foreseeable detriment to the community.

*The materials and treatments proposed are all durable materials. Whether or not the proposal is offensive to one's sensibilities or would otherwise constitute a foreseeable detriment to the community are matters of personal preference.*

## **GUIDELINES ANALYSIS**

### **CONTEXT AND COMPATIBILITY**

The Guidelines state that “scale, orientation, relationship and character of the built environment make up its context” (pg. 6). This section lays out “rules of thumb” pertaining to conceptualism and compatibility. Subsections (i)-(vi) are applicable to this development.

- (i) “All new construction and development should incorporate those characteristics of the Town that exhibit a positive distinctive architectural style and/or established functional or landscape patterns.” (pg. 7)

*The proposed building would incorporate the Town's distinctive architectural style through features such as standing seam metal roofs and divided lite windows as well as incorporating materials such as native stone and brick.*

- (ii) "New buildings and additions should be sited in a manner that will complement rather than conflict with existing adjacent buildings, landscape, streetscape, parking, and access." (pg. 7)

*The proposed building would be sited to form a full block of new buildings along North 21<sup>st</sup> Street from East O Street to an alley on the south. The building would be built close to the street similar to other buildings in Old Town and only separated by a sidewalk (although a plaza would sit mid-block on North 21<sup>st</sup> Street). Parking would be located to the rear of the building leading to less conflict with pedestrians.*

*Vehicular access may be a concern as the building's density is likely to increase vehicle trips compared to the existing buildings and businesses on the site, and any additional trips would ultimately be routed through North 21<sup>st</sup> Street which is one-way only for half of its length in Old Town.*

- (iii) "Transitions between existing and new buildings or additions should be gradual. The height and mass of new projects or construction should not create abrupt changes from those of existing buildings." (pg. 7)

*The proposed building would vary in height from a single-story (approximate height: 14 feet from 21<sup>st</sup>) along parts of North 21<sup>st</sup> Street to 5 and 6 stories (approximate height: 59 feet from 21<sup>st</sup>) for a relatively abrupt change of approximately 45 feet in height within the site itself. Nearby buildings along North 21<sup>st</sup> Street are primarily 2-2.5 stories with only the Town's old mills rising above that height. If built, Vineyard Square would become the tallest building in town.*

- (iv) "Natural amenities, such as mature trees and views, should be preserved and incorporated in the design of downtown projects where possible. Buildings should not turn their backs to existing or potential amenities." (pg. 7)

*Although the site lacks many natural amenities, a rooftop terrace incorporating landscaping is proposed over the single-story commercial space on 21<sup>st</sup> street.*

- (v) "Buildings should be oriented to connect with high activity areas, such as restaurant dining areas or major pedestrian areas, in order to create connections and linkages." (pg. 7)

*The proposed building is oriented toward its bordering streets and sidewalks which provide the means by which pedestrians travel to Old Town's restaurants, shops, and offices.*

- (vi) "Loading areas, trash and storage areas, and rooftop or other mechanical equipment in particular, should be screened from view from adjacent properties." (pg. 7)

*Although the locations of these areas are not yet certain, the provided elevations appear to meet this goal.*

## **SITE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Street Frontage**

The Guidelines "strongly encourag[e] that the front building façade...[and] the predominant major building point of entry shall be oriented toward the major street. (pg. 8)

*The primary entrances to the proposed building are oriented toward North 21<sup>st</sup> Street and East O Street with a lesser number of entrances facing the surface parking lot to the east.*

### **Site Grading**

The Guidelines state that "site grading should be sensitive to the existing natural landscape" to "preserve existing trees" and "leveling of the site with severe cut and fill...is strongly discouraged." (pg. 9)

*The concept currently takes advantage of the site's change in elevation, so there will likely be minimal site grading as part of this project.*

### **Pedestrian Access**

“Pedestrian access to the site should be considered equally with vehicular access. Sidewalks and night lighting should be designed to encourage pedestrian traffic.” (pg. 9)

*Sidewalks are available to pedestrians around three of the building's four sides, and these sidewalks are connected to sidewalks in front of the neighboring commercial buildings.*

## **GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES**

### **Building Form**

The Guidelines state that “new buildings...must be compatible with existing buildings and reflect, but not be required to mimic the architectural styles of the early to mid-twentieth century...[and] respect Purcellville's historic architectural styles.” (pg. 10)

*The elevations propose a range of architectural styles and details; the compatibility of these styles with existing buildings varies.*

### **Façade Articulation**

- a) “Long, blank, unarticulated street wall facades without window or door openings are prohibited. Walls should be divided into a series of structural bays.” (pg. 12)

*There are no unarticulated walls displayed on the submitted elevations which include a number of structural bays.*

- b) “Monolithic street wall facades should be “broken” by vertical and horizontal articulation (e.g. sculpted, carved or penetrated wall surfaces) characterized by: (a) breaks (reveals, recesses) in the surface of the wall plane; (b) placement of window and door openings; or (c) placement of balconies, awnings, and canopies.” (pg.12)

*Walls are articulated through a mixture of recessed breaks in the wall plane, windows and door openings, balconies, and awnings.*

- c) “Large unbroken facade surfaces at the storefront level must be avoided. This can be achieved in a number of ways including: (a) dividing the facade into a series of display windows with smaller panes of glass; (b) constructing the facade with small human scale materials such as brick or decorative tile along bulkheads; (c) providing traditional recessed entries; (d) careful sizing, placement, and overall design of signage; and (e) providing consistent door and window reveals.” (pg. 12)

*Façade surfaces at the storefront level are broken by use of recessed entries and display windows. Some of the windows utilize simulated smaller panes of glass although most do not.*

### **Storefront Design**

- b) “Commercial storefronts and entries are typically recessed and/or sheltered by a covered arcade structure, canopy or awning. This can provide additional display area, a sheltered transition to the interior of the store and emphasizes the entrance. Recessed entries should be retained and are strongly encouraged in new storefront construction.” (pg. 14)

*Some entries are recessed or sheltered, but greater detail would be necessary to determine the extent to which this is true throughout the building.*

- d) “Façade Color: Color preferences are very subjective. The intent of these design guidelines is not to limit creativity or personality but to provide guidance to the types of colors that are both respectful and complimentary to the architecture as well as the Town. The use of light, subdued or neutral colors and natural building materials, such as brick, wood or stone is encouraged.” (pg. 14)

*The façade would consist primarily of “light, subdued or neutral colors” and these have been made notably more subdued compared to the original design presented at last month’s discussion.*

- e) “A visually interesting streetscape with varied but compatible colors and materials is the desired objective of the Design Guidelines. Property owners are encouraged to paint their structure a field and trim color that is complimentary to the adjacent property.” (pg.15)

*The predominant trim color is white while there are numerous field colors proposed. The field colors are primarily beige, light grey, light brown, and dark brown with red, blue, and yellow highlights (although only subdued shades of these primary colors are proposed).*

- f) “One base color should be used for the entire facade. Different trim colors are encouraged however these guidelines recommend limiting façade trim colors to a maximum of three different colors.” (pg.15)

*More than one base color is proposed for the façade as the building attempts to appear as if it consists of multiple buildings. White trim is predominately proposed; however, railings and some trim are only noted to “be finished in a color complimentary to the associated façade material.”*

- h) “Primary colors on façade exteriors is inconsistent with the character encouraged by these design guidelines and should be considered with caution.” (pg.15)

*Subdued primary colors are proposed although the “blue vertical wood siding” proposed for the east façade comes closest to approaching traditional primary color shades.*

## **Windows**

“Aesthetically, a building with plenty of window area coupled with articulations such as shutters, holdbacks, substantial window cornices and sills is far more inviting and provides a sense of quality and permanence. As a general rule, businesses with generous amounts a glass area tend to be visible and potentially more successful than businesses that are less visible from the street and present a “closed-in” appearance.” (pg. 15)

*The proposed building contains significant window area on all facades as well as cornices, sills, and shutters on numerous windows.*

## **Doors**

- b) “Wood doors with wood storefront windows are preferable to aluminum systems. If aluminum systems are absolutely necessary, a pre-finished color (compatible with the approved color scheme) is preferred. Mill finish aluminum or dark bronze finish is strongly discouraged.” (pg. 17)

*Doors are proposed to be “factory-finished aluminum clad wood or extruded aluminum,” and specific colors are not proposed.*

- c) “Retail shop doors should contain a high percentage of glass.” (pg. 17)

*The doors to retail areas would contain a high percentage of glass.*

- e) “Use of clear glass on the first floor is strongly recommended.” (pg. 17)

*It appears that all glass used on the building would be clear.*

## **Roofs**

- a) “Roofs may be flat or sloped and consistent with the surrounding buildings. Attention should be given to the incorporation of decorative parapets and meaningful cornice lines (e.g. Valley Energy Building).” (pg. 17)

*The building would primarily consist of flat roofs with limited use of sloped standing seam metal roofs, and an asphalt shingle mansard roof is proposed for the west (21<sup>st</sup> Street) façade.*

- b) “Several of the more appropriate building designs in Town exhibit full roofs with the gable ends facing the primary street. The visible portion of sloped roofs should be sheathed with a roofing material complementary to the architectural style of the building and other surrounding buildings.” (pg. 17)

*The building would make only minor use of gables as the majority of the roof would be flat. The visible portion of the sloped roofs would be sheathed in standing seam metal panels.*

- d) “A-frames roof shapes, large mansards, geodesic domes, Quonset huts style, or chalet type buildings/roofs are not allowed. These radical roof pitches and styles render overly prominent or out-of-character buildings.” (pg. 17)

*A large mansard roof approximately 15 feet tall by 30 feet wide is proposed on the west façade.*

- e) “Low pitched exposed roofs with a slope of 5:12 or shallower is not in keeping with the towns vernacular and strongly discouraged.” (pg. 17)

*Most of the roof would consist of flat roofs hidden by parapets and cornices. Most of the remaining pitched roofs appear to be steeper than 5:12.*

## **Building Materials**

The Guidelines state that “whenever possible, it is desired that time honored materials, present at the beginning of the twentieth century, are used in order to further the historic charm of the town. Natural materials age more gracefully and hold up better over time than many of the newer products.” (pg. 18)

*Proposed time honored materials include: clear glass, wood siding, brick, natural stone and standing seam metal roofing. Discouraged materials currently proposed include: asphalt shingle roofing and potentially imitation stone veneer (depending upon the applicant’s plans for the masonry accents).*

## **Exterior Columns**

- a) In keeping with the traditional design styles prevalent in the Town, traditional Tuscan or Doric round columns are encouraged for any visible porch and entranceway. Turned posts may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Exposed 4x4’s, 6X6’s and steel columns are not allowed.

*All traditional columns appear to be Tuscan. More detail is needed on the thin columns supporting balconies on the north and east façades to ensure that exposed 4x4’s, 6x6’s, nor steel are being proposed.*

- b) Proper column proportion is important. The width of columns, at the widest point, should be in the range of 1/8th to 1/12th of the column’s total height. (Example: a column that is 8 feet high and 24” in diameter appears overly squat and heavy. A column that is 8 feet high and 6” in diameter looks too spindly and incapable of holding up any load.)

*All traditional columns appear to have proper proportion.*

- c) Columns may be made out of solid wood or a composite material. All columns should have a traditional base and capital expression.

*All traditional columns are proposed to be made out of cast stone and perhaps wood (it is unclear what material will be used for the columns on the south façade at the square). All proposed traditional columns have a traditional base and capital expression.*

- d) Columns that terminate onto a flat porch ceiling are discouraged. Columns should be seen to hold up a wrapped beam that supports the load above.

*Unable to evaluate without greater detail provided.*

### **Awnings and Canopies**

- a) “Awnings are encouraged and should be a single color or two-color stripes. Lettering and trim, utilizing other colors is allowed in the valance area and will be considered signage. All awning signage must comply with the Town’s Zoning Regulations.” (pg. 20)

*Awnings of various styles are proposed throughout the building.*

- b) “Awning shape should relate to the window or door opening and be sympathetic to the building design. Barrel shaped awnings should be used to complement arched windows while rectangular awnings should be used on rectangular windows.” (pg. 20)

*The proposed awnings would be rectangular and either sloped or flat (perpendicular to the wall surface).*

### **Rear Entrances**

- a) “Rear entries should be treated architecturally and compatible with the overall building design.” (pg. 21)

*The rear entries are similar to doors facing North 21<sup>st</sup> Street and East O Street. .*

### **LIGHTING**

*Specific details about proposed lighting and fixtures have not been provided at this time.*

### **FINDINGS**

- 1) The proposed design for Vineyard Square satisfies the requirements of the C-4 zoning district (except for perhaps the height of the gambrel-style roof at the northeast corner).
- 2) Excluding determinations based on personal preference as noted above, the proposed design generally satisfies the design criteria of the HC overlay district with the possible exception of the compatibility of the proposed height/scale (see below).
- 3) The proposed design generally satisfies the Guidelines with the primary exceptions of the proposed mansard roof and the use of asphalt shingles.

### **NOTES ON THE REGULATION OF BUILDING HEIGHT**

When two provisions within an Ordinance address the same thing, those provisions must be harmonized if at all possible. In this case, both the underlying C-4 district regulations and the HC Overlay District regulations regulate building height.

As Vineyard Square is located within the HC zoning overlay and is visible from a designated HC Street (North 21<sup>st</sup> Street), per Article 14A, Section 4.1 of the zoning ordinance, the design criteria set forth in Article 14, Section 8.1 apply. As such, Subsections 5 and 6 (noted above) authorize the BAR to consider height and to require as a condition to issuing a Certificate of Design Approval that the height:

- a. Conform to accepted architectural principles
- b. Exhibit characteristics of architectural and aesthetic durability and quality
- c. Not be plainly offensive to human sensibilities
- d. Not constitute a reasonable foreseeable detriment to the community

Therefore, the BAR may exercise the limitation of height as an acceptable approach to administering these particular design criteria relative to height. Because Article 4 and Article 14A must be harmonized, the BAR could not authorize an applicant to exceed the height limit set forth in Article 4 but could reduce it as a condition of issuing a Certificate of Design Approval.

With that said, it should be noted that the C-4 height standards pertaining specifically to the properties on which Vineyard Square is proposed were amended relatively recently (August 12, 2008). This implies that the stated height standards were adopted by the Town Council with the specific intention of allowing a taller building on these properties than could otherwise be constructed elsewhere in the C-4 district.

**ACTION:**

One of following sample motions should be used:

*I move that the BAR approve CDA13-11 Vineyard Square as presented.*

*-Or-*

*“I move that the BAR approve CDA13-11 Vineyard Square with the following required conditions:*

- A.
- B.
- C.

*And/or the following recommendations:*

- A.
- B.

*-Or-*

*“I move that the BAR not approve CDA13-11 Vineyard Square for the following reasons:*

- A.
- B.
- C.

*-Or-*

Section 54-78 of the Purcellville Town Code requires the Board to approve, with or without conditions, or disapprove an application. Failure to take one of these actions within 30 days from the date of the meeting at which an application is first considered shall be deemed approval of the application as submitted (unless a longer period is mutually agreed to between the applicant and town). The next BAR meeting is currently scheduled for December 17<sup>th</sup> which is within 30 days of the November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, so the Board may also move to table CDA13-11 Vineyard Square until the next meeting.