

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RELATING TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION AT THE 1000 N.  
GLEBE ROAD/BLUE GOOSE SITE (Site Plan Amendment SP #64)

Submitted by Joan K Lawrence, Chair, Arlington County Historical Affairs and Landmark  
Review Board  
October 29, 2013

After the presentation and discussion at the SPRC meeting on October 28, 2013, it was clear that this project represents missed opportunities. In its current iteration, not only does it not even remotely acknowledge or relate to the historic structure that will be demolished, but it does not provide a distinctive gateway structure likely to age well to replace the existing distinctive historic structure. While the use of a concavely curved wall at the corner is a start that needs further development, it seems an afterthought and does not relate well to the angularity of the office/academic building corner. The seemingly random use of exterior blue elements, such as the blue light wash on an otherwise blank horizontal surface and the horizontal blue spandrel, do not evoke either the verticality or the spirit of the historic building. These elements, moreover, are not readily apparent to the casual viewer. The expressed intention possibly to salvage and reuse blue panels from the historic building is appreciated. However, the uses proposed at last night's SPRC meeting, such as in the interior, on retaining walls or planters, do not tie the present to the past in any meaningful way.

Why not use the current concave configuration of the existing building at the Glebe and Fairfax corner for at least the first two stories with salvaged blue panels to give a sense of verticality at an entrance to the café or even to the building? A corresponding concave element such as that proposed for a retaining wall, but expanded vertically, perhaps to form a portion of a pergola or the like could echo this aspect of the historic building. The salvaged tile with the number of the Glebe Road address can then be placed in a location that more closely acknowledges its origins.

While the use of historic markers may be helpful, they fail to provide the same sense of history of place that can be achieved by a building carefully designed to respect that which has been lost. This area is at risk of becoming like a city I just visited where much of the past and the historic has been relegated to a multitude of markers along the sidewalks adjoining what have become tired high rise structures. Arlington can do better than this.

As was stated at the meeting, Marymount has been a good citizen to Arlington in many ways, including in its careful stewardship of the historic structures on its main campus. I encourage both co-applicants to do the additional work required to make this project one that better respects and acknowledges both the historical and gateway aspects of the site.