

From: Scala, Mary Joy
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2015 10:57 AM
To: Stakem, Trip
Subject: BAR Action – August 18, 2015- 511 1st Street N.

August 24, 2015

Public Utilities, Trip Stakem
305 4th Street NW
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Certificate of Appropriateness Application

BAR 15-08-02
511 1st Street N.
Tax Parcel 330001205
City of Charlottesville, Owner/ Public Utilities, Trip Stakem, Applicant
Above ground water vault

Dear Applicant,

The above referenced project was discussed before a meeting of the City of Charlottesville Board of Architectural Review (BAR) on August 18, 2015. The following action was taken:

The BAR denied (6-1, with Ms. Knott opposed) Option 1, an above-ground vault, and wanted Public Works to investigate Option 4, as described by Laura Knott, to locate the vault beneath the sidewalk; these plans (regarding the removal/replacement of historic curbing at back of sidewalk) would be circulated and approved administratively. If and only if Option 4 is not a viable option, the BAR requests an official explanation as to why it doesn't work, and then they approve either Option 2 or 3 at Public Works' discretion.

In accordance with Charlottesville City Code 34-285(b), this decision may be appealed to the City Council in writing within ten working days of the date of the decision. Written appeals, including the grounds for an appeal, the procedure(s) or standard(s) alleged to have been violated or misapplied by the BAR, and/or any additional information, factors or opinions the applicant deems relevant to the application, should be directed to Paige Barfield, Clerk of the City Council, PO Box 911, Charlottesville, VA 22902.

Upon completion of the project, please contact me for an inspection of the improvements included in this application. If you have any questions, please contact me at 434-970-3130 or scala@charlottesville.org.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Joy Scala, AICP
Preservation and Design Planner

Mary Joy Scala, AICP
Preservation and Design Planner
City of Charlottesville
Department of Neighborhood Development Services
City Hall – 610 East Market Street
P.O. Box 911
Charlottesville, VA 22902
Ph 434.970.3130 FAX 434.970.3359
scala@charlottesville.org

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
August 18, 2015**



Certificate of Appropriateness Application

BAR 15-08-05
511 1st Street N
Tax Parcel 330001205
City of Charlottesville, Owner/ Public Utilities, Applicant
Above ground water meter vault

Background

511 N First Street is a non-contributing condominium multi-family building built in 1967 (survey attached). This property and others in the area were added to the North Downtown ADC District in 2006.

November 16, 2010 - The BAR denied (8-0) the request to replace two Pin Oak trees removed without approval with two Japanese Maples. The BAR wants the applicant to return to the BAR with a site plan with a creative solution; not a one-for-one replacement; including large trees to serve as shade trees on the street. (Also, a suggestion was made to have smaller and fewer parking signs at the entrance.)

Application

Recently Public Works had installed, without BAR approval, an above-ground vault for 3" water meters to serve the Charlottesville Towers condominium building at 511 North 1st Street. The reinforced concrete vault measures 11'-7" x 6'-1", and is 6'-6" deep, and is partially buried on private property owned by the condominium association. The new vault replaced a previous vault located under the City sidewalk on North 1st Street.

City staff told Public Works they needed to apply for a certificate of appropriateness. Public Works has suggested three options: (1) Landscaping only; (2) Cut the sides to be at-grade, then install a new top; (3) Lower the entire vault.

Criteria and Guidelines

Review Criteria Generally

Sec. 34-284(b) of the City Code states that,

In considering a particular application the BAR shall approve the application unless it finds:

- (1) That the proposal does not meet specific standards set forth within this division or applicable provisions of the Design Guidelines established by the board pursuant to Sec.34-288(6); and*
- (2) The proposal is incompatible with the historic, cultural or architectural character of the district in which the property is located or the protected property that is the subject of the application.*

Pertinent Standards for Review of Construction and Alterations include:

- (1) Whether the material, texture, color, height, scale, mass and placement of the proposed*

addition, modification or construction are visually and architecturally compatible with the site and the applicable design control district;

(2) The harmony of the proposed change in terms of overall proportion and the size and placement of entrances, windows, awnings, exterior stairs and signs;

(3) The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation set forth within the Code of Federal Regulations (36 C.F.R. §67.7(b)), as may be relevant;

(4) The effect of the proposed change on the historic district neighborhood;

(5) The impact of the proposed change on other protected features on the property, such as gardens, landscaping, fences, walls and walks;

(6) Whether the proposed method of construction, renovation or restoration could have an adverse impact on the structure or site, or adjacent buildings or structures;

(8) Any applicable provisions of the City's Design Guidelines.

Pertinent Design Review Guidelines - Site Design and Elements

B. PLANTINGS

Plantings are a critical part of the historic appearance of the residential sections of Charlottesville's historic districts. The character of the plantings often changes within each district's sub-areas as well as from district to district. Many properties have extensive plantings in the form of trees, foundation plantings, shrub borders, and flowerbeds. Plantings are limited in commercial areas due to minimal setbacks.

- 1) Encourage the maintenance and planting of large trees on private property along the streetfronts, which contribute to the "avenue" effect.*
- 2) Generally, use trees and plants that are compatible with the existing plantings in the neighborhood.*
- 3) Use trees and plants that are indigenous to the area.*
- 4) Retain existing trees and plants that help define the character of the district, especially street trees and hedges.*
- 5) Replace diseased or dead plants with like or similar species if appropriate.*
- 6) When constructing new buildings, identify and take care to protect significant existing trees and other plantings.*
- 7) Choose ground cover plantings that are compatible with adjacent sites, existing site conditions, and the character of the building.*
- 8) Select mulching and edging materials carefully and do not use plastic edgings, lava, crushed rock, unnaturally colored mulch or other historically unsuitable materials.*

H. UTILITIES & OTHER SITE APPURTENANCES

Site appurtenances, such as overhead utilities, fuel tanks, utility poles and meters, antennae, exterior mechanical units, and trash containers, are a necessary part of contemporary life. However, their placement may detract from the character of the site and building.

- 1. Plan the location of overhead wires, utility poles and meters, electrical panels, antennae, trash containers, and exterior mechanical units where they are least likely to detract from the character of the site.*
- 2. Screen utilities and other site elements with fences, walls, or plantings.*
- 3. Encourage the installation of utility services underground.*
- 4. Antennae and communication dishes should be placed in inconspicuous rooftop locations, not in a front yard.*
- 5. Screen all rooftop mechanical equipment with a wall of material harmonious with the building or structure.*

Pertinent Design Review Guidelines – Public Design & Improvements

H. TRAFFIC SIGNALS & UTILITIES

- 1) *Consider installing signals on poles that are placed beside the street and are compatible with the pedestrian-scaled light fixtures.*
- 2) *Place utilities underground, or behind buildings, if possible.*
- 3) *Screen surface equipment.*
- 4) *Place necessary utilities, such as transformers and overhead wires, so that they are as visually unobtrusive as possible.*

Recommendations and Discussion

There are three major concerns:

First, the project was undertaken without first consulting with the BAR or NDS, thereby possibly narrowing options.

Second, the unsightly utility is located in the front yard of a property in the North Downtown ADC district. A private property owner would not be permitted to install a mechanical unit or accessory structure in the front yard. Such units are permitted only in the side or rear yard with minimum five foot setback and specified screening.

Third, this type of large vault installation could be repeated, as a standard, all over the City.

In order to make this installation comply, it would have to be placed flush with the ground. Leaving it above ground would not conform with setback requirements, and would be very difficult to screen. This mulched area was originally intended as a landscaped area to help screen the parking lot. Even if the vault is placed flush, having a large underground vault there precludes landscaping in that immediate area.

The City should adopt a policy regarding the placement of these large units, whether they are proposed in design control districts or not.

Suggested Motion

Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including City Design Guidelines for Site Design, I move to find that the installation of an above-ground water meter vault does not satisfy the BAR's criteria and is not compatible with this property and other properties in the North Downtown ADC district, and that the BAR therefore requires the following modifications to the installation:

NORTH 1ST STREET

511 North 1st Street



STREET ADDRESS:	511 North 1 st Street
MAP & PARCEL:	33-1.101-.614
PRESENT ZONING:	R-3
ORIGINAL OWNER:	
ORIGINAL USE:	Apartment Building
PRESENT USE:	Apartment Building
PRESENT OWNER:	Condominiums (numerous)
ADDRESS:	Condominiums (numerous)
DATE/ PERIOD:	1967
STYLE:	Vernacular
HEIGHT IN STORIES:	5.0 Stories
DIMENSIONS/LAND AREA:	
SOURCES:	Charlottesville City Records and 2005 Architectural Survey
CONTRIBUTING:	No

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This 5-story, flat-roofed, rectangular-shaped modern apartment building was constructed in 1967 and is called Charlottesville Towers. The building, which is of unadorned brick construction over a steel frame, features metal sash casement windows; bays of projecting balconies, and an entrance on the north side marked by a flat-roofed canopy. Because of its age, this building is non-contributing resource in the District. The complex is made up of a series of condominiums, so there are numerous owners.

LOT 14

ONT STREET

LOT 2

LOT 3

LOT 4

LOT 13

LOT 14

LOT 15

LOT 16

LOT 17

2-431

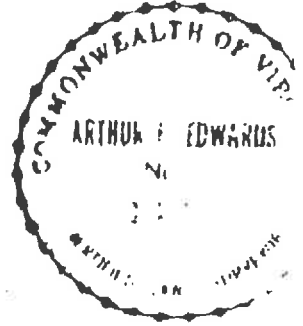
SEE D B 400 P 368 FOR EASEMENT FOR PARKING AREA

LOT "B"

LOT A
D B 238-175

CHARLOTTESVILLE TOWERS

Paved parking



10' V T & T Easement
D B 266-265

I, ARTHUR F. EDWARDS, A REGI SURVEYOR, DO HEREBY CERTIF PLAT IS ACCURATE AND COMP PROVISIONS OF VA. CODE ANN. 5, AND THAT ALL UNITS OR PORT DEPICTED HEREON HAVE BEEN S COMPLETED

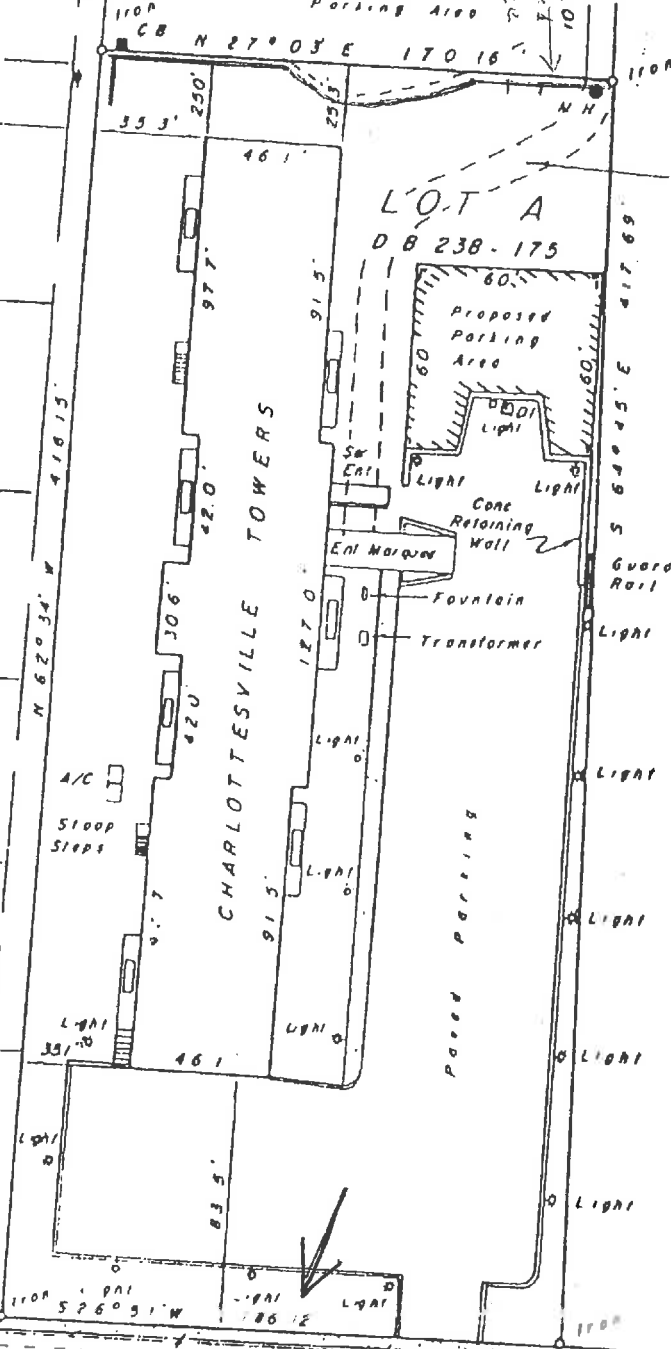
D B 174-23
D B 2-305

SEE ARTICLE III AND EXHIBIT DECLARATION OF CONDOMINIUM CHARLOTTESVILLE TOWERS COI A DESCRIPTION OF THE CONVA

NOTE EXTERIOR MEETS TAKEN FROM PLAT PREPAR. RANDOLPH. LOT POSSIBLY SUBJECT TO SEWER EASEMENT D.B. 3

N. 1ST STREET

Gas Line
San Sewer
4" W L





**Board of Architectural Review (BAR)
Certificate of Appropriateness**

Please Return To: City of Charlottesville
Department of Neighborhood Development Services
P.O. Box 911, City Hall
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902
Telephone (434) 970-3130 Fax (434) 970-3359

Please submit ten (10) copies of application form and all attachments.
For a new construction project, please include \$375 application fee. For all other projects requiring BAR approval, please include \$125 application fee. For projects that require only administrative approval, please include \$100 administrative fee. Make checks payable to the City of Charlottesville.
The BAR meets the third Tuesday of the month.
Deadline for submittals is Tuesday 3 weeks prior to next BAR meeting by 3:30 p.m.

Owner Name CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE ^{Public} ~~Utilities~~ Applicant Name PUBLIC UTILITIES - TRIP STAKEM
Project Name/Description WATER METER VAULT Parcel Number 330001205
Property Address 511 1ST STREET N.

Applicant Information

Address: 305 4th ST. NW
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22903
Email: stakeme@charlottesville.org
Phone: (W) 970-3908 (H) _____
FAX: _____

Signature of Applicant

I hereby attest that the information I have provided is, to the best of my knowledge, correct. (Signature also denotes commitment to pay invoice for required mail notices.)

[Signature] 7/27/15
Signature Date

Property Owner Information (if not applicant)

Address: 511 1ST ST N
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22903
Email: _____
Phone: (W) _____ (H) _____
FAX: _____

TRIP STAKEM 7/27/15
Print Name Date

Property Owner Permission (if not applicant)

I have read this application and hereby give my consent to its submission.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____ Date _____

Do you intend to apply for Federal or State Tax Credits for this project? NO

Description of Proposed Work (attach separate narrative if necessary): SEE ATTACHED

List All Attachments (see reverse side for submittal requirements):

METER VAULT MEMO; OPTIONS COMPARISON; PICTURES(8); PROPOSED EASEMENT PLAT; METER VAULT CUT SHEET.

For Office Use Only	Approved/Disapproved by: _____
Received by: _____	Date: _____
Fee paid: _____ Cash/Ck. # _____	Conditions of approval: _____
Date Received: _____	_____

City of Charlottesville

MEMO



TO: Mary Joy Scala; City of Charlottesville Board of Architecture review
FROM: Trip Stakem, City of Charlottesville Public Utilities
DATE: 7/27/15
SUBJECT: 511 1st Street North Water Meter Vault

Background

Public Utilities has a responsibility to maintain our water facilities to comply with regulatory requirements. We do this by adopting standards for utility installations, where those standards have been reviewed and recommended to us by consultants knowledgeable about industry standard operational and safety considerations. State regulations include an obligation for us to install and maintain components in a manner that will assure a high degree of capability and reliability¹, and for water meter vaults to be protected from infiltration of surface water, by the provision of drainage drained to the surface of the ground where they won't be subject to flooding, or drained to an absorption pit. Sump pumps can be used where other means of drainage are not practicable.²

Recently, City Public Works, Utilities Division, commenced a capital project to replace an old water main located underground within the 1st Street North public right-of-way. The purpose of the Project is to replace an old 4-inch water main, with a new 6-inch main and add hydrants for fire protection. As part of the Project, if and when we encounter water meter vaults that do not meet current utilities standards, we replace them as part of the Project Work.

The old water meter vault for the condo building at 511 1st Street N, also known as "The Towers", was located in City-owned right-of-way, underneath the sidewalk. It was a masonry block structure with an iron access door (manhole cover). The location of the old vault was consistent with the requirements of City Code, Sec. 31-101(a), which states that, at the time water service is originally established to a property:

"The owner or agent shall immediately designate on the site the location where he desires these utilities [water and sewer connections] to enter his property. The city will then proceed with the installation of service lines *to the property line*.... **The building shall then be set to conform to these elevations.**"
[Emphasis added].

Additionally, City Code Sec. 31-102(d) states:

¹ VDH regulations, 12VAC5-590-360

² VDH regulations, 12VAC5-590-1160

“All [water meter and service line³] installations...**from and including the meter to the main, shall be the property of the city**, and the city shall maintain such service line and meter.”

Utility facilities that are owned and maintained by the City must be located within a City-owned right-of-way, or within an easement established on private property.

New Vault for The Towers' Meter

Pre-existing Vault Condition

During Design of the new water main within 1st Street N., we investigated the location of the old underground water meter vault that was serving 511 N. 1st Street. The old meter vault did not meet current standards. The old vault was deficient in several ways:

- There was no by-pass line to allow for testing of the water meter.
- The existing wheel-gate valve in the box was broken.
- The old masonry block meter vault had cracked mortar, and was in need of replacement.
- The access hatch was rusted, and had a hole cut in the top where water could enter and that presented a potential pedestrian hazard.
- The old vault was too small to accommodate installation of a new valve and a bypass line, as required by 1) and 2), above.
- The existing meter vault did not meet bury depth requirements established to prevent freezing.

Our current utility standards specify precast concrete vault structures.⁴ The precast concrete vault currently approved by Public Utilities is 10 feet long x 7 feet wide x 6.5 feet high. With new installations, these precast vaults are typically installed underground, with an at-grade entry hatch, and either in City-owned ROW, or located on private property adjacent to public ROW within a dedicated utility easement. Because public ROW is often crowded with other underground public infrastructure, the use of private property/ easements is not unusual.

Location Alternatives

Existing Location: The new vault location had to be inline with the existing piping and is preferred to be as close to the right-of-way as possible. The area within the public right-of-way immediately adjacent to 1st Street, N. could not accommodate the new precast concrete structure for the following reasons.

- The sidewalk in this location is a 4' in width, with a curb to pavement on one side and a 12-inch -16-inch tall retaining wall on the other side. The vault is wider than the sidewalk, so it could not be installed under the sidewalk without damaging the retaining wall.

³ In 31-102(d), the reference to “service line” is to those service lines installed by the City from its meter to the property line.

⁴ These are safer for Utility personnel who have to lower themselves down into the vault occasionally to replace or repair meters, valves, connections, etc.

- Under the street, less than 3 feet from the edge of the curb, there is an existing 2-inch HDPE gas line. The location of the gas line prohibits installation of a vault under the paved portion of the public street.

The paved parking lot for the Towers property and the landscaped area behind the fence offered the possibility of a safe, completely underground installation, with a manhole cover, in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. However the condo association did not wish for their parking lot area to be disturbed and would not provide easement for these areas.

Another location- the sloped landscaped area behind the retaining wall—offered the only other potentially suitable [operationally] possibility. The condo board agreed to convey an easement to the City for installation and maintenance of the vault in the landscaped area and in this location only, subject to the following conditions:

- The new vault had to be installed in the landscaped area behind the sidewalk, and configured so that the long side is parallel to the road. (A perpendicular installation would have required removal and replacement of the retaining wall and fence, and would have resulted in the exposed face being farther down the slope, and more exposed.)
- No work could take place that will involve excavation within the paved areas of the parking lot or entrance way.
- The existing concrete block vault, which also provided support for a mailbox, would be removed by the City entirely, and disposed of.
- Restoration of the excavated areas will be mulched in lieu of seed and straw.
- A new, Fire-Code compliant fire hydrant will be installed in the corner of the landscaped area adjacent to the driveway entrance, 2-3 feet from the sidewalk and 2-3 feet from the entrance way. Placement of the hydrant in this manner will preserve on-street parking spaces (to accommodate the needs of the other neighbors).
- The board allowed the City to construct/ install the vault in the agreed area, and agreed that it would execute a written easement upon completion of installation, with the as-built location and description of the facilities shown on a survey plat. Both the easement and the plat would be in a form suitable for recordation in the land records.

On the date installation of the vault was performed, a representative from the precast vault manufacturer was on hand to oversee the installation, which had been scheduled to occur on a specific date and with special equipment (a large crane, which had to lift the vault off the delivery vehicle and into the excavated hole). We did not foresee the above-grade installation—we had anticipated that the vault WOULD be placed entirely underground; however, during the installation the manufacturer's representative recommended that the vault should not be set below grade at this sloped location, because it would accumulate mud and sediment which adds to maintenance, shortens the life of the vault and expedites the corrosion of the internal piping.⁵ If we had not followed the recommendations of the manufacturer's representative, we potentially

⁵ As mentioned earlier, these issues relate to the state regulatory obligations to assure capability and reliability of the utility facilities, and effective drainage of the vault.

could have had warranty issues. The decision was made in the field by the project inspector to follow manufacturer's recommendations.

Status and Options

As of July 7th, 2015 installation of the vault was completed and the site was restored with mulching, in accordance with our agreement with the condo association. Additional work remains to repair the sidewalk, but that work has been put on hold until we can respond to the BAR's concerns.

- Now that the old, sub-standard vault has been removed, we don't have the option of re-installing a non-compliant new structure under the sidewalk. Because of the gas line in the street ROW and utility separation requirements, we can't put a new structure there.
- The only acceptable alternative location(s) are on the private property of the Towers, in alignment with the location of the established service line between the meters and the condo building. We don't have the option of discontinuing water service to this property; therefore, we need an easement from the Towers condo association to install the vault/ meters on private property. They have not been willing to grant an easement for an installation under their parking lot, and according to the City Attorney's Office, we cannot force/ condemn an easement when there is a location closer to the ROW, and in line with the existing service line, which works, operationally, and for which the owner is willing to grant an easement.
- Options, in order of Public Works' preference (additional information on each option is included in attached documentation):
 - *Leave in place and landscape* – paint the vault and add landscaping, or otherwise “treat” the appearance so that it is less incompatible with the character of the historic district. We will implement (at City cost) any remedial measures along these lines that the BAR will require, so long as the property owner will permit us to do the work consistent with the easement we've agreed to. We request that the condominium board be invited to attend the BAR meeting at which this will be discussed.
 - *Leave in place and lower top* - saw cut the concrete sides of the vault so that they are at-grade, or close thereto, and then install a new top. **Potential problem(s)**: This installation will severely reduce the headroom for the maintenance workers making it very difficult, if not impossible to perform maintenance, on the vault in the future. Also, this installation will require a new, custom designed vault top that will require heavy equipment to install. This installation may void the manufacturer's warranty. But we'll do it if the BAR requires it.
 - *Lower the entire vault* – Remove the vault, excavate deeper and re-install at the same location, but lower, so that it's underground with a manhole lid access. **Potential problem(s)**: This installation will require a new, custom designed vault top that will require heavy equipment to install. Water service for the Tower's will need to be disrupted for approximately 6-8 hours during the installation. , but we'll do it if the BAR requires it.

Option 1: Landscaping

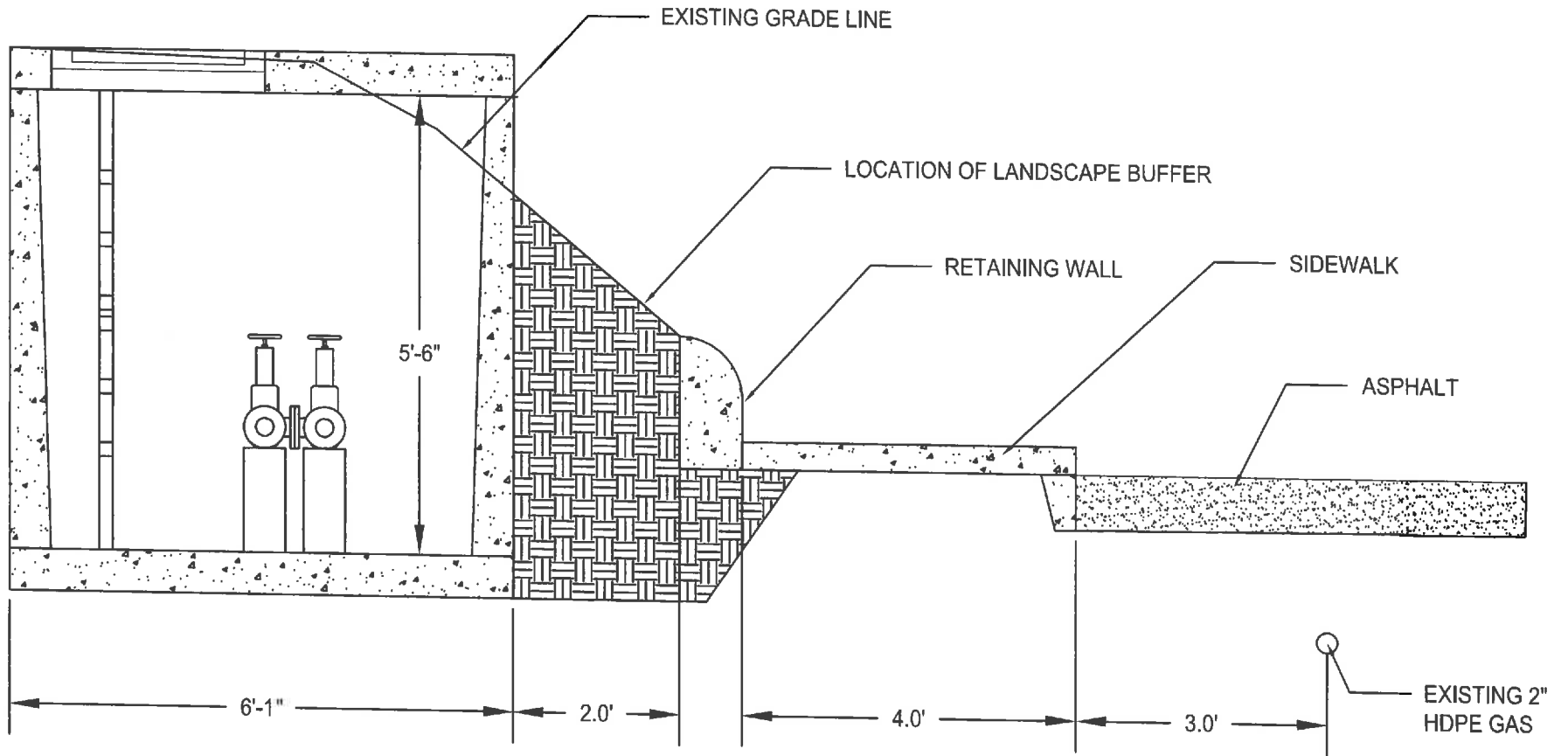
Description	Landscaping will be installed in the area around the vault that will block the exposed areas from view. The vault can be painted to blend with surroundings.
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced visibility of the exposed side of vault • Low Cost • Can proceed immediately • Low maintenance • Minimal disruption to neighborhood • No water outage for the Towers property
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional maintenance to establish plants if not planted in the fall • Vault is above grade
Time to Construction	Installation of landscaping could happen immediately, but preferred planting in the fall.
Construction Duration	Landscaping could be installed in several hours.
Approximate Cost	\$3500

Option 2: Lowering the top of existing structure

Description	The top of the existing structure will be lowered by 24 inches. This will involve removing the existing top and cutting 24 inches out of the walls of the existing structure and installing a new custom-built top fitted with a 24" manhole-style entry way.
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No visibility of the vault-only a 24" manhole frame and cover will be exposed at the back of the landscaped area. • No water outage for the Towers property • No maintenance for additional landscaping
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance will become more difficult due to reduce head space inside the vault • Disruption to the neighborhood due to construction • Reduced parking for the Towers during construction • Medium to high costs • Potential to void manufacturer's warranty for vault
Time to Construction	Due to lead times for the new vault lid and scheduling specialty equipment to install, the work will take 3-6 weeks to schedule.
Construction Duration	8 hours for construction, 4 hours for restoration (2 days)
Approximate Cost	\$11,220

Option 3: Lowering the entire vault

Description	The entire vault will be lowered by 24 inches including internal piping. This will involve disconnecting the piping, removing the entire vault, excavating 2 feet below the structure and re-installing the existing vault fitted with a custom-built top fitted with a 24" manhole-style entry way.
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No visibility of the vault – only a 24" manhole frame and cover will be exposed at the back of the landscaped area.• No maintenance for additional landscaping
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disruption to the neighborhood due to construction• Reduced parking for the Towers during construction• Disruption of water service to the Towers for duration of construction• Potential safety hazards due to additional depth of excavated trench• Highest cost
Time to Construction	Due to lead times for the new vault lid and scheduling specialty equipment to install, the work will take 3-6 weeks to schedule.
Construction Duration	16 hours for construction, 4 hours for restoration (3 days)
Approximate Cost	\$13,150



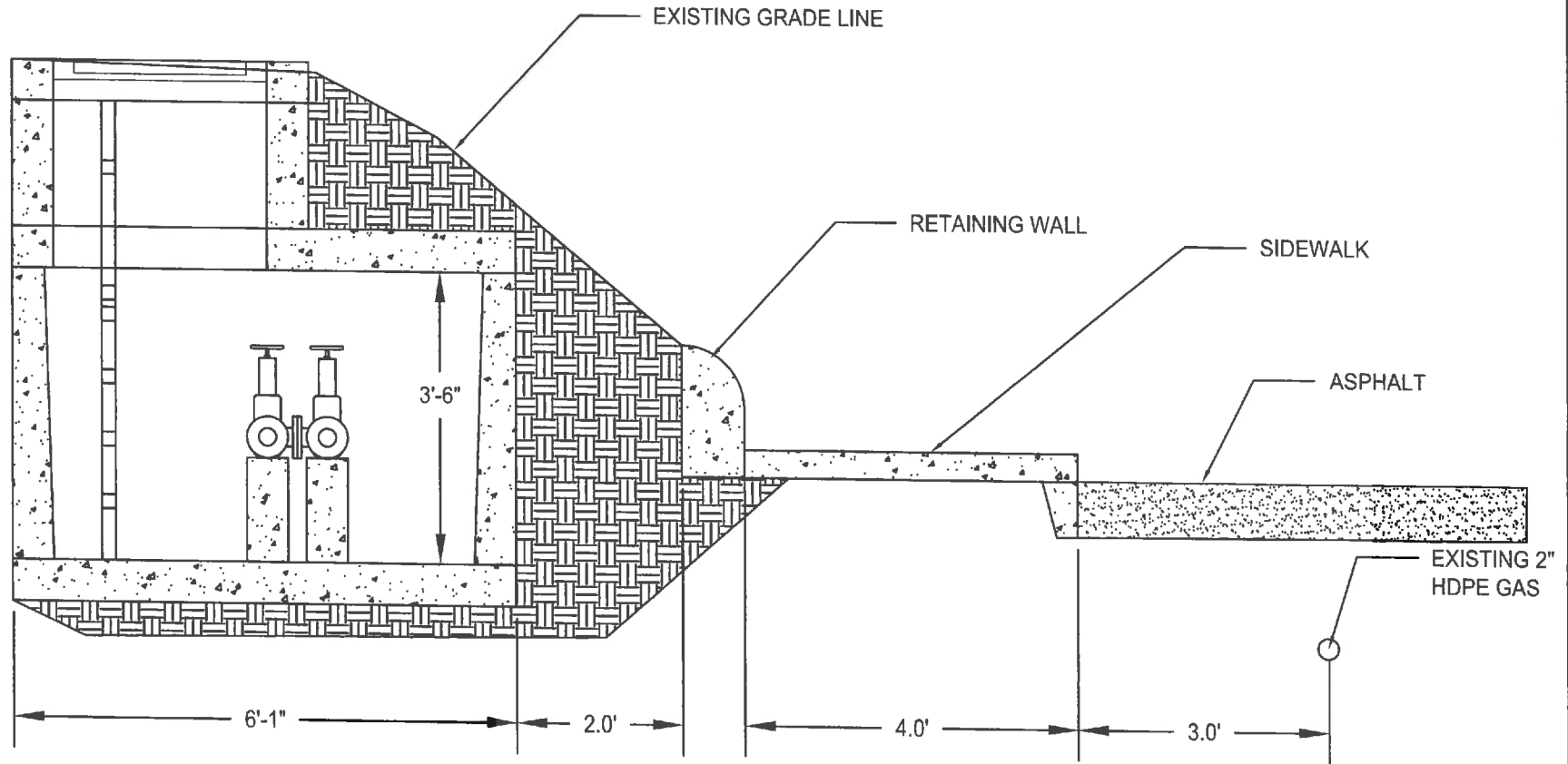
CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

REVISION	DATE
AUG	2015

CITY STANDARDS	
3" METER VAULT	
511 N. 1ST STREET	
CURRENT CONDITION	
SCALE: N.T.S.	STANDARD NUMBER:

NOTES:

- BOTTOM OF VAULT AND PIPING WILL REMAIN IN CURRENT LOCATION.
- TOP WILL BE REMOVED. 24" WILL BE CUT FROM EACH WALL. A CUSTOM TOP WITH RISER STACK ENTRANCE WILL BE INSTALLED.
- NO WATER DISRUPTION IS NECESSARY.



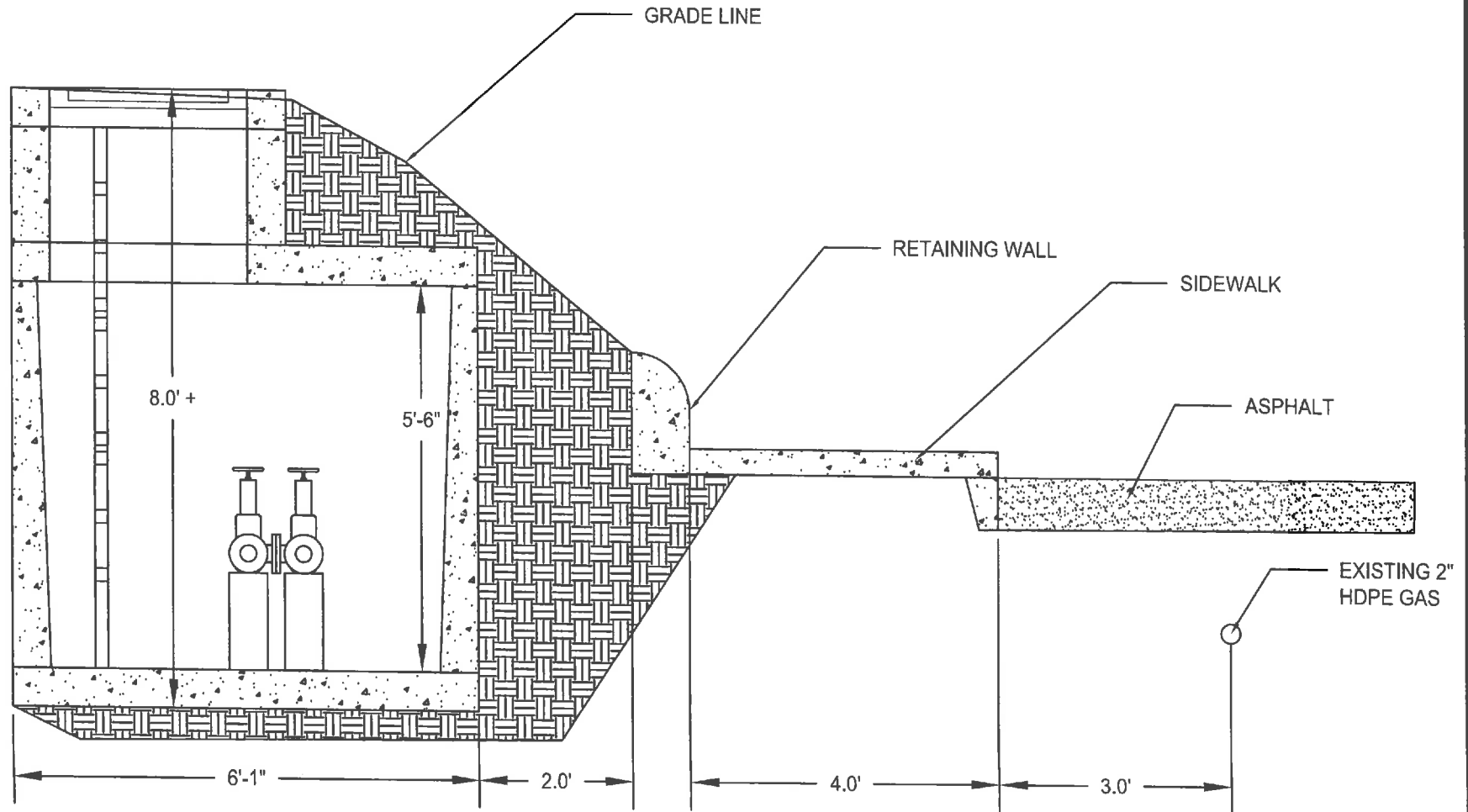
CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

AUG	2015
REVISION	DATE

CITY STANDARDS	
3" METER VAULT	
511 N. 1ST STREET	
OPTION 2 - LOWER LID	
SCALE: N.T.S.	STANDARD NUMBER:

NOTES:

- ENTIRE VAULT WILL BE REMOVED. 24" ADDITIONAL EXCAVATION UNDER THE VAULT. VAULT WILL BE REINSTALLED AT NEW GRADE.
- TOP WILL BE REMOVED. A CUSTOM TOP WITH RISER STACK ENTRANCE WILL BE INSTALLED.
- 10-12 HOUR WATER DISRUPTION FOR TOWERS BUILDING IS NECESSARY.



CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

AUG 2015

REVISION DATE

CITY STANDARDS

3" METER VAULT
511 N. 1ST STREET
OPTION 3 - LOWER VAULT

SCALE: N.T.S.

STANDARD NUMBER:

**EXAMPLES OF ABOVE GROUND UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**



Gas regulation station on E. Market Street across from Vinegar Hill



Above Grade Dominion Power vault hidden by vegetation.



Power Transformers at Ridge/McIntire and Preston Avenue



Gas regulations at McIntire and Perry Drive



Friendship Court – Drive Entrance off of Monticello Ave (retrofit installation in 2013)



Cavalier Inn – 105 Emmet Street N (not to current standards)





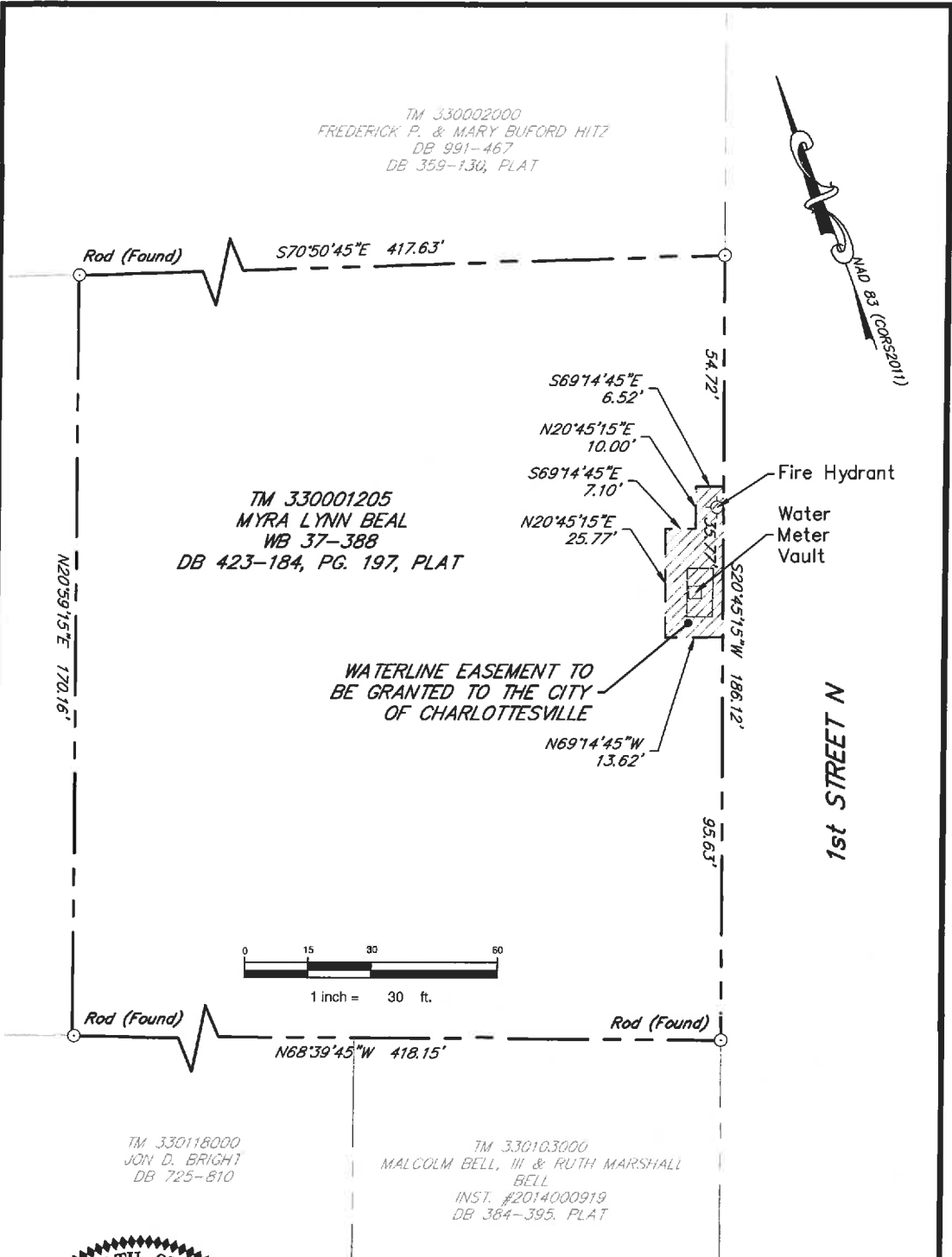
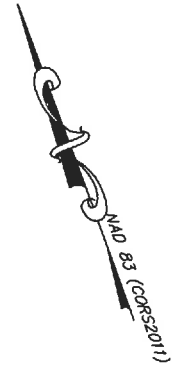




TM 330002000
 FREDERICK P. & MARY BUFORD HITZ
 DB 991-467
 DB 359-130, PLAT

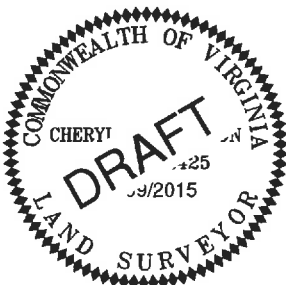
TM 330001205
 MYRA LYNN BEAL
 WB 37-388
 DB 423-184, PG. 197, PLAT

WATERLINE EASEMENT TO
 BE GRANTED TO THE CITY
 OF CHARLOTTESVILLE



TM 330118000
 JON D. BRIGHT
 DB 725-810

TM 330103000
 MALCOLM BELL, III & RUTH MARSHALL
 BELL
 INST. #2014000919
 DB 384-395, PLAT

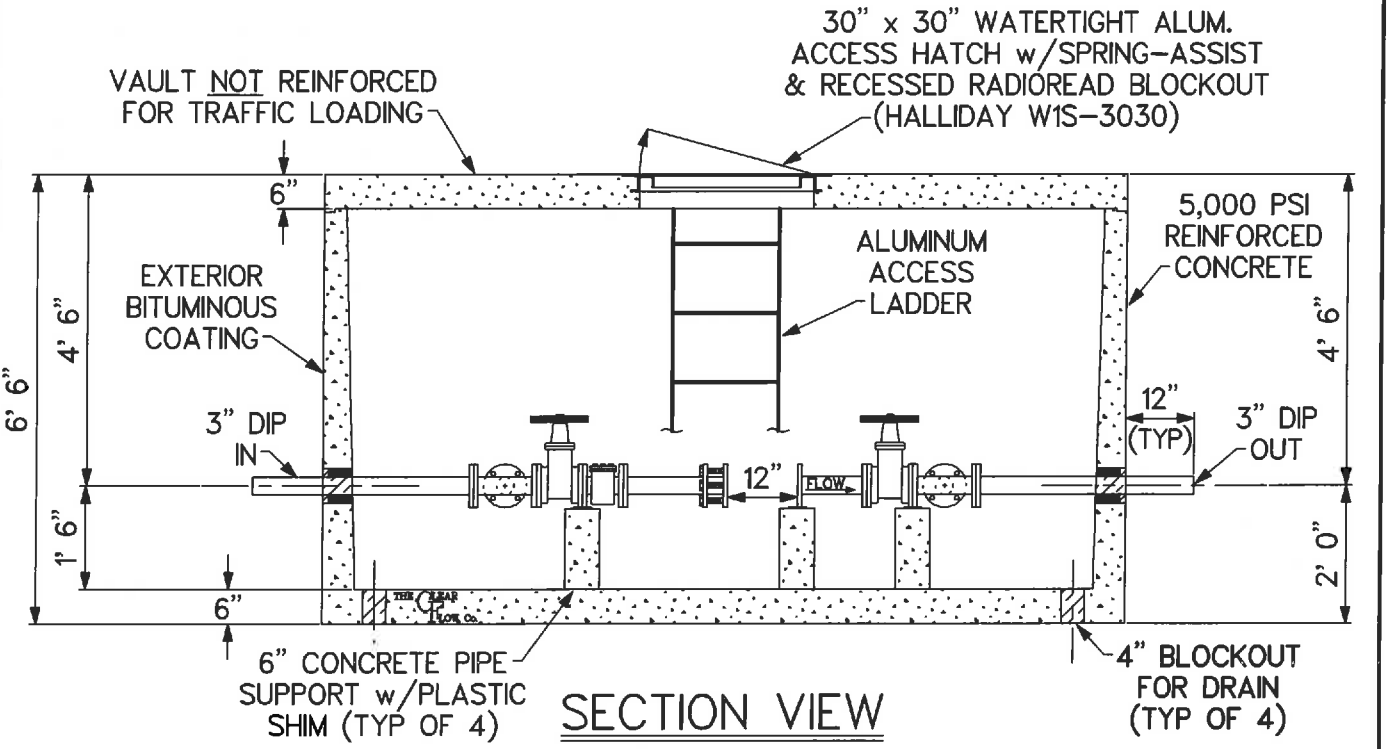
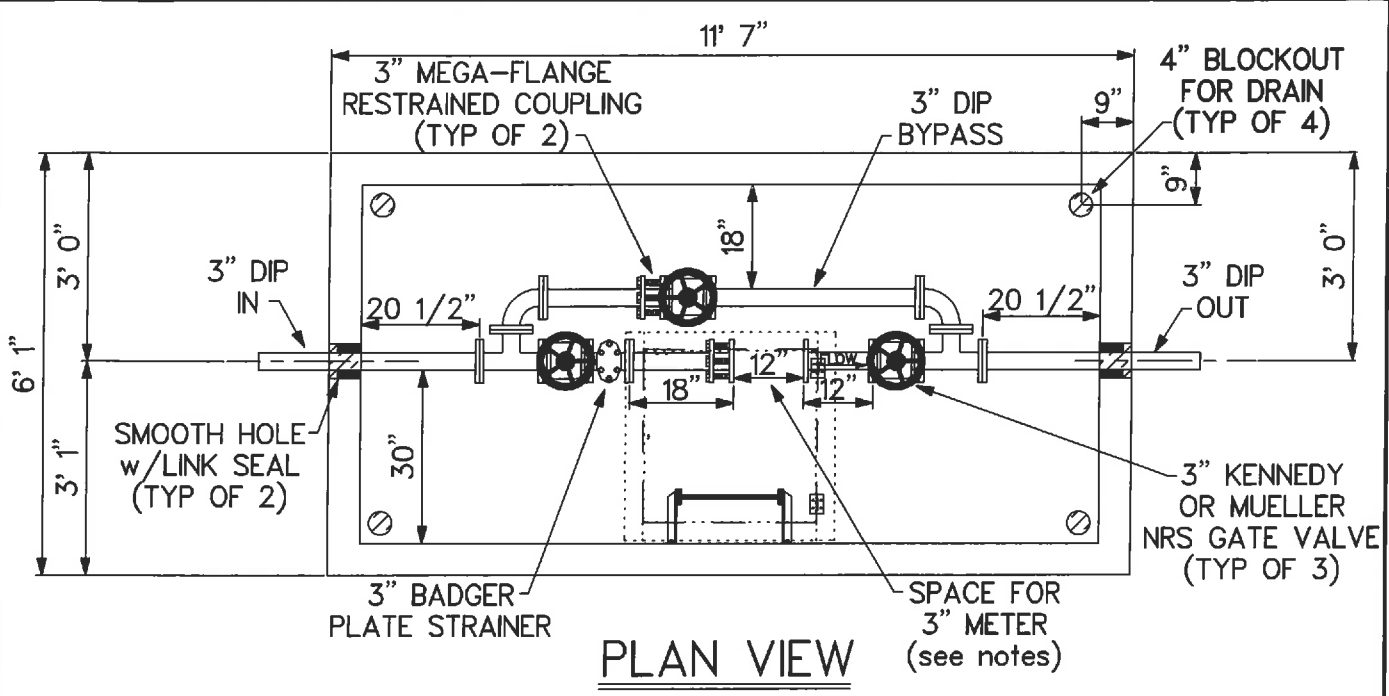


- NOTES:**
- 1). This survey is based on deeds and plats recorded in the City of Charlottesville Land records.
 - 2.) All improvements are not shown.
 - 3). This compiled plat was prepared without the benefit of a title report and may not depict all easement and encumbrance of record.

COMPILED PLAT SHOWING PROPOSED
 WATERLINE EASEMENT ACROSS TAX
 PARCEL 330001205
 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

DRAWN: CAS	SCALE: 1"=30'
CHECKED:	DATE: 07/09/2015
PROJECT: C14147C-01S	

P:\C14147C-01S\CAD\C14147C-01S Easement.dwg July 9, 2015 2:08:26 PM



NOTES:

1. CLEAR FLOW VAULT SHIPPED ASSEMBLED WITH HEAVIEST LIFT APPROX. 24,000 LBS.
2. 12" SPACE LEFT FOR 3" BADGER TURBO METER SUPPLIED & INSTALLED BY THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE
3. CONTRACTOR MUST PROVIDE CRANE TO OFF-LOAD AND SET STRUCTURE

DESIGN		1/17/11
DRAWN	VITALY S. KIRLYUK	
REVISIONS		DATE

CLEAR FLOW
 BY CP&P
 CONCRETE PIPE & PRECAST, LLC
 210 STONE SPRING ROAD
 HARRISONBURG, VA 22801
 (540) 434 - 6979

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
FIRST STREET
3" WATER METER VAULT
 CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

* PRINTOUT NOT TO ANY SCALE *

REF. NO. MTR3-CHARLOTTESVILLE

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Genevieve Keller <genevieve.keller@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2015 10:14 AM
To: Scala, Mary Joy; BAR
Subject: Application for 511 N 1st St

Dear Ms. Scala and Members of the BAR:

As the owners of 504 North 1st Street and directly affected by the City's unapproved public installation of an inappropriate aboveground vault at 511 North 1st Street,

we ask that you only consider Option 3.

Option 1 is inadequate and will not retain a harmonious and compatible landscape appropriate to the historic district.

Option 2 is an inefficient solution that would not produce a compatible aboveground solution in harmony with the historic landscape, and, according to the application narrative, would not promote infrastructure efficiency.

Generally, cost is not within the purview of the BAR. Had this project been planned appropriately with public and BAR involvement from the initial planning phase, any additional costs could have been avoided.

It is likely that the lessons learned from this flawed installation process will result in better planned and executed infrastructure projects so that costly mistakes and errors can be avoid in the future.

We hope that this unfortunate installation will motivate the BAR to request that the City initiate a process in concert with preservation staff and the BAR to develop policies and guidelines that will ensure that new infrastructure does not degrade our urban environment. We hope that this process will extend to all neighborhoods and all City departments—even to those for which design review is not required—because all city residents and visitors deserve neighborhoods that are not only efficient and well serviced but that also provide inviting, pleasant and unobstructed landscapes adjacent to city streets and sidewalks.

Thank you for your time and efforts to keep our city a livable, historic community,

Genevieve Keller
434 295-3880
genevieve.keller@gmail.com

J. Timothy Keller, FASLA
434 825-1251
tkeller@iastate.edu

To: **Mary Joy Scala, AICP**

Preservation and Design Planner

City of Charlottesville

Department of Neighborhood Development Services

City Hall – 610 East Market Street

Charlottesville, VA 22902

scala@charlottesville.org

cc. BAR

From:

Patricia Carlson,

701 Watson Avenue

Charlottesville, Va 22901

434-979-4113

(Owner of 3 properties 511 1st Street North, AKA Charlottesville Towers)

Re: 511 1st Street North Water Meter Vault

Date: August 12, 2015

As a tax payer and an owner of three units in Charlottesville Towers condominium, I wish to comment on the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Certificate of Appropriateness and the three options Mr. Stakem provided for moving the newly installed water meter vault.

I am in favor of *Option 1: Landscaping the current location without any relocation.*

The City of Charlottesville is well known for excellent landscape management. I trust their judgement to provide appropriate plantings. I DO NOT find the current structure displeasing or offensive. Any of the three options will require plantings which I am sure will be splendid. Towers has an outdoor water faucet, hose and timer adjacent to the current, new water meter vault.

I strongly oppose *Option 2. Lowering the top of the existing structure.* For the following negative impacts cited by Mr. Stakem on the BAR Certificate of Appropriateness Application:

- *“The potential to void manufacturer’s warranty for the vault”* This seems imprudent and careless with taxpayer funds and inviting future trouble and expense.
- *“Maintenance will become more difficult due to reduced head space inside the vault.”* This invites future problems for city workers and additional expense.
- *“Medium to high cost”.* Misuse of funds.

I **strongly oppose** *Option 3. Lower the entire vault.* For the following negative impacts cited by Mr. Stakem on the BAR Certificate of Appropriateness Application:

- *"Disruption of water service to Towers for the duration of construction"*
- *"Potential safety hazards due to the additional depth of excavated trench"* Why would the city want to create a known hazard?
- *"Highest cost"* As a taxpayer with 5 properties in the city, I am concerned that taxpayer funds are not appropriately used.

I have spoken with the tax paying owners of 14 individual units within Charlottesville Towers and none objected to the appearance of the current installation. There was universal concern that taxpayer's money was being wasted by altering an existing utility that was appropriate and inoffensive.

Choosing to risk voiding the manufacturer's warranty on a newly installed, expensive piece of equipment seems the ultimate waste of taxpayers funds.

The Board is unanimously opposed to Option 3 which would disrupt water service to the Towers.

Option 3. **Lowering the Entire Vault.** The disruption of water service to the building is strongly opposed.

None of the 8 owner of a property at Charlottesville Towers, present at the meeting, found the current location objectionable nor did they find the appearance of the vault objectionable.

One owner, present at the board meeting, suggested a creative response: Invite the city to use the current vault as a platform for an art in place installation.

- *"Highest cost"* As a taxpayer with 5 properties in the city, I am concerned that taxpayer funds are not appropriately used.

I have spoken with the tax paying owners of 14 individual units within Charlottesville Towers and none objected to the appearance of the current installation. There was universal concern that taxpayer monies were being wasted by altering an existing utility that was appropriate and inoffensive.

Choosing to risk voiding the manufacturer's warranty on a newly installed, expensive piece of equipment seems the ultimate waste of taxpayers funds.

The Board is unanimously opposed to Option 3 which would disrupt water service to the Towers.

Option 3. **Lowering the Entire Vault.** The disruption of water service to the building is strongly opposed.

None of the 8 owners of a property at Charlottesville Towers, present at the meeting, found the current location objectionable nor did they find the appearance of the vault objectionable.

One owner, present at the board meeting, suggested a creative response: Invite the city to use the current vault as a platform for an art in place installation.

First, I would like to thank Patricia Carlson for allowing me to use her template and adjust accordingly for my input into this issue. I believe there was a lot of hard work that was put into making this new water meter vault up to date and functional for the city's needs. I understand that we have a Board of Architectural Review to keep things "appropriate". I think the city did a lovely job. A couple phrases come to mind when I sat down & first heard about all of this (that Pat has noted above....)

- "Let's not make a mountain out of a molehill."
- "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." (and certainly don't void the warranty)
- "Beauty is in the eyes' of the beholder" (that would be the beauty of "it's paid" & "less is more")
- "Waste Not, Want Not" and, of course....
- "K.I.S.S..... Keep it Simple"

Thank you for your time,

Mary Sherrill

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Melanie Miller <melanie@houseofmillers.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2015 12:09 PM
To: Scala, Mary Joy
Subject: FW: meter vault on N. 1st Street

I don't think you get the ones only to BAR@charlottesville.org. Is that correct?

From: Helena Devereux [mailto:hdevereux@embarqmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2015 9:42 AM
To: BAR@charlottesville.org
Subject: meter vault on N. 1st Street

To Members of the BAR:

I am a long-time resident of N. 1st Street in a design control district, and I support the guidelines which encourage the preservation of the historic character of the street and the neighborhood.

The large concrete meter vault which has been installed on 1st Street in front of 511 N. 1st is a jarring element in the street scape. The industrial appearance is inappropriate on a residential and historic street, and is a serious detriment to the street.

I urge the City to bury the concrete vault and make it as inconspicuous as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Helena Devereux
532 N. 1st Street
Charlottesville

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Melanie Miller <melanie@houseofmillers.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2015 12:07 PM
To: Scala, Mary Joy
Subject: FW: concrete vault on N First St.

Here is another

-----Original Message-----

From: towleslawson@gmail.com [mailto:towleslawson@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2015 8:49 AM
To: Malcolm Bell
Cc: BAR@charlottesville.org
Subject: Re: concrete vault on N First St.

Dear Mary Joy and the Board of Architectural Review,

I must concur with what Mr. Bell has written below. I understand the board fined the former owners of my house for performing what can only be described as minute alterations relative to the enormous vault which now sits almost at eye level, directly across first street from my house 512 First Street North.

Though I have spoken multiple times with Trip Stakem, he never mentioned what he had to have known would be a very obvious installation, which is not at all in keeping with the landscape which surrounds it.

Regards,

Towles Lawson
512 First Street North
Charlottesville

> On Aug 17, 2015, at 8:59 PM, Malcolm Bell <mb2s@virginia.edu> wrote:

>

> To the members of the Board of Architectural Review:

>

> As thirty-eight year residents of downtown Charlottesville living

> in

the design control district, we have consistently endorsed and abided by the BAR's criteria for changes, from paint color to new construction. We live on North First Street in a restored mid-nineteenth century house, one of the eighteen or so residences north of High Street that give First Street its architectural character and charm. We have paid the required fees willingly as we understand the importance of maintaining the design qualities of the historic district.

> We were therefore greatly surprised by the sudden appearance of a large concrete bunker (six by twelve feet in its horizontal dimensions) in the landscaping buffer that screens to some extent the Charlottesville Towers, an apartment house of no architectural distinction on North First St. that replaced a historic house and garden several decades back, and that is also our immediate neighbor. The bunker, which resembles an underground mausoleum, is close to the sidewalk and projects considerably above ground level. Had we or any of the other residents of the street proposed such an addition to the BAR, we would surely have been turned down. This conspicuously inappropriate, tarred concrete addition to the streetscape was not presented as a possible project to the

neighborhood in advance, nor ever mentioned by the city engineers who were frequently on the scene for the sewer relining during the preceding months. We are thus forced to consider the likelihood that city officials recognized the bunker as a likely source of controversy and therefore constructed it in haste, to become in effect a fait accompli.

> This feature has all the charm of a bomb shelter. We urge the city

> to

remove it, applying the same design standards to its own additions to the design control district that it requires of residents.

>

> Malcolm and Ruth Bell

> 433 North Street

> Charlottesville

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Melanie Miller <melanie@houseofmillers.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2015 12:09 PM
To: Scala, Mary Joy
Subject: FW: Above Ground Meter Vault on North First Street

From: Marcy Day [mailto:marcy.day@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2015 9:59 AM
To: BAR@charlottesville.org; Marcy Day
Subject: Above Ground Meter Vault on North First Street

Dear Members of the Board of Architectural Review:

I wanted to let you know that as a thirty-five year resident of North First Street I am very distressed by the above ground meter vault that has appeared in front of the Towers on our street in the past few weeks. I can see this vault from four rooms of my home as well as from my yard and front porch and it is hideous. I had assumed this was temporary vault, because I was sure in the historic district where we are required to get the smallest paint or architectural change approved, that the Board of Architectural Review would never allow something so hideous to be a permanent part of our street scape. I was informed by a neighbor yesterday that this was not the case, and that the city planned to keep this eyesore permanently above ground. I implore you to reconsider, and bury the thing. It detracts from our beautiful street to have this unsightly concrete box looming above the sidewalk. Please make the city officials who were responsible for this error responsible for correcting it.

Many thanks for your time and consideration.

Marcy Day

--

Marcella M. Day
Director of Promotions
McIntire Department of Music
PO Box 400176
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4176

434.924.6492

www.music.virginia.edu/subscribe

www.facebook.com/uvamusic

www.twitter.com/uvamusic

Scala, Mary Joy

From: bill emory <billemory@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2015 12:10 PM
To: Mohr, Tim; DeLoach, Candace; Earnst, Emma; Kurt Keesecker; Knott, Laura; Miller, Melanie; Graves, Whit; Sarafin, Justin; Schwarz, Carl; Scala, Mary Joy
Cc: Tree Commission; Galvin, Kathy; Smith, Dede
Subject: Item 12, Meter Vault COA

Dear Board of Architectural Review,

Streets are the warp and woof of the fabric that ties our City together. They are our place, our sustaining commons, the pathways that bind us together. In the last seventy years the design of the transport and utility functions of the street have gained dominance over the character and beauty of the public land that ties our neighborhoods together.

Item 12 on your agenda this evening deals with an above grade structure at 511 1st Street. In 2008 the west side of 1st street was captured by Google in the view below.



In 2010, the Charlottesville Towers Condo Association cut down two large q.palustris (pin oaks) in the area between the sidewalk and their parking lot fence, these can be seen above in the photo above to the left and right of the water meter in the sidewalk.



(2010-one of the stumps)



Summer of 2015, the City has installed an above ground meter box, replacing the former below grade meter at this location.

The action by the City is antithetical to spirit and letter of the Guidelines and its recognition of the importance of streetscape, the contribution of character that derives from our streets to the surrounding historic district.

Elements in public ownership, such as sidewalks, streets, plantings, street furniture, and street lighting also contribute to the character of the district and are discussed in Chapter 6

Site design and elements, Utilities and other site appurtenances:

1. Place overhead wires, utility poles and meters, antennae, trash containers, and exterior heat exchangers in locations where they are least likely to detract from the character of the site.

The character of 1st street:

d. 1st and 2nd Streets: narrow streets, residential, small to moderate scale, broad mix of styles, porches, metal roofs, 1 1/2 to 2 stories, generally shallow setbacks and spacing with some variety, landscaping.

The resulting character of many of the residential streets in the historic districts is one of lush plantings and mature shade trees. While there may be much variety within the house types and styles along a particular street, the landscape character ties together the setting and plays an important role in defining the distinctiveness of the districts.

Chapter Six in the Guideline is Very Clear on the subject:

Public Improvements Chapter 6 F. Traffic Signals and Utilities
2. Place utilities underground, if possible, or behind buildings.

It is the customary practice of the Department of Public Works to place water meters underground. I am not aware of other above ground meter vaults in our City. This is an insupportable precedent.

The actions, in the past five years, by the Towers and by our City have severely degraded this section of 1st Street.

In its COA application the City cited various factors to excuse the above grade installation of the meter vault. The items cited included "the vault is wider than the sidewalk", existing 2" gas-line three feet from the curb, 16" retaining wall, warranty issues... These items do not preclude the customary practice of properly installing the meter box below grade.

The City, in its after the fact COA application says: *Because of the gas line in the street ROW and utility separation requirements, we can't put a new structure there (in the ROW).*

But, quoting from the City's draft utility easement policy, one wonders whether the above ground meter vault, as a structure, would be allowed by the policy below?

1. No structures of any kind will be allowed within utility easements or within 10' of any existing public utility main. This includes, but is not limited to rock outcroppings, retaining walls, buildings, and monument signs. The Public Works Department, at its sole discretion, will determine what constitutes a structure in applying this landscaping policy.

I respectfully request that you deny the City's application for a COA and require them to pursue option 3.

Lower the entire vault - Remove the vault, excavate deeper and re-install at the same location, but lower, so that it's underground with a manhole lid access.

Ideally, they would consider restoring the entire bank for use by street trees and place the vault beneath the sidewalk and as necessary, underneath the street.

Additionally, I hope that you will encourage the applicant to consider that design and beauty have a profound effect on the health and welfare of the residents of this City, both in ADCs and in areas not so designated.

Thanks for your service!

Bill Emory

1604 E Market Street
Charlottesville VA

--

<http://www.billemory.com>

To: **Mary Joy Scala, AICP**
Preservation and Design Planner -City of Charlottesville
Department of Neighborhood Development Services
City Hall - 610 East Market Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902
scala@charlottesville.org

From: William M. Currier
Owner of 2 properties 511 1st Street North, AKA Charlottesville Towers

Re: 511 1st Street North Water Meter Vault

Date: August 14, 2015

As a tax payer and owner of two units in **Charlottesville Towers**, 511 1st St North, I wish to comment to the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Certificate of Appropriateness and the three options Mr. Stakem provided for moving the newly installed water meter vault.

I am in favor of Option 1: Landscaping the current location without any relocation.

The City of Charlottesville is well known for excellent landscape management. I trust their judgement to provide appropriate plantings. I DO NOT find the current structure displeasing or offensive. Any of the three options will require plantings which I am sure will be satisfactory. Charlottesville Towers has an outdoor water faucet, hose and timer adjacent to the current water meter vault.

I strongly oppose Option 2. Lowering the top of the existing structure. For the following negative impacts sited by Mr. Stakem on the BAR Certificate of Appropriateness application:

- *"The potential to void manufacturer's warranty for the vault" This seems imprudent and careless with taxpayer funds and inviting future trouble and expense.*
- *"Maintenance will become more difficult due to reduced head space inside the vault." This bodes future problems for city workers and additional expense.*
- *"Medium to high cost".*

I am totally opposed to Option 3. Lower the entire vault. For the following negative impacts sited by Mr. Stakem on the BAR Certificate of Appropriateness application:

- *"Disruption of water service to Towers for the duration of construction"*
- *"Potential safety hazards due to the additional depth of excavated trench" Why would the city want to create a known hazard?*
- *"Highest cost" As a taxpayer with 5 properties in the city, I am concerned that taxpayer funds are not appropriately used.*

Pat Carlson, Towers owner, has spoken with the tax-paying owners of 14 individual units within Charlottesville Towers and none objected to the appearance of the current installation. There was universal concern that taxpayer monies were being wasted by altering an existing utility that was appropriate and inoffensive. Choosing to risk voiding the manufacturer's warranty on a newly installed, expensive piece of equipment seems the ultimate waste of taxpayers funds.

The Charlottesville Towers Board of Directors is unanimously opposed to Option 3 that would disrupt water service to the Towers for period of 8 to 12 hours at a time. (Option 3. Lowering the Entire Vault). The disruption of water service to the building is strongly opposed by tenants and owners alike. Additionally, none of the 8 property owners at present at the meeting at the Directors' meeting on August 4, 2015 found the current location objectionable nor did they find the appearance of the vault objectionable.

One owner, present at the board meeting, suggested a creative response: Invite the city to use the current vault as a platform for an art in place installation! Now, there's thinking outside the box!

Thank you for considering my request to leave the water meter vault as it is currently (Option #1).

W. M. Currier

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Scala, Mary Joy
Sent: Monday, July 06, 2015 4:07 PM
To: 'Malcolm Bell'
Subject: RE: First Street problem

Thank you; Genevieve Keller has also issued a complaint and staff is meeting about it tomorrow.

Mary Joy Scala, AICP
Preservation and Design Planner
City of Charlottesville
Department of Neighborhood Development Services City Hall – 610 East Market Street P.O. Box 911 Charlottesville, VA
22902 Ph 434.970.3130 FAX 434.970.3359 scala@charlottesville.org

-----Original Message-----

From: Malcolm Bell [mailto:mb2s@virginia.edu]
Sent: Monday, July 06, 2015 4:05 PM
To: Scala, Mary Joy
Subject: First Street problem

Dear Ms. Scala,

Some of us here on North First Street have lately discovered that a twelve by six foot concrete bunker is being constructed in front of the Charlottesville Towers. The work has been accomplished during the very extensive and lengthy excavation in the street north of the intersection of Hedge Street and North First Street, which we thought was limited to the street itself. The concrete feature now visible is very conspicuous, close to the sidewalk, on a site that has otherwise been used for landscaping. It occupies about seventy square feet and will project above grade. It is perhaps worth remembering that the site of the Charlottesville Towers was formerly occupied by a nineteenth century house, demolished to make way for a very large and undistinguished apartment complex that contrasts in all respects with the character of the historic neighborhood. The landscaped screen of trees and plantings that runs along the sidewalk on the west side of North First Street at least has helped to mask the large parking lot of the apartment complex and to maintain at least a modicum of respect for the local setting. In our view this addition is really out of character and would, we believe, hardly qualify for a certificate of appropriateness.

Malcolm and Ruth Bell
433 North First Street
Charlottesville

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Carl A. Schwarz <caschwarz83@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2015 9:07 PM
To: BAR
Cc: Scala, Mary Joy
Subject: Fw: concrete vault on N First St.

This went to my spam folder. I'm just forwarding it in case anyone else missed it.

Carl

-----Original Message-----

From: Malcolm Bell
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2015 8:59 PM
To: BAR@charlottesville.org
Subject: concrete vault on N First St.

To the members of the Board of Architectural Review:

As thirty-eight year residents of downtown Charlottesville living in the design control district, we have consistently endorsed and abided by the BAR's criteria for changes, from paint color to new construction. We live on North First Street in a restored mid-nineteenth century house, one of the eighteen or so residences north of High Street that give First Street its architectural character and charm. We have paid the required fees willingly as we understand the importance of maintaining the design qualities of the historic district.

We were therefore greatly surprised by the sudden appearance of a large concrete bunker (six by twelve feet in its horizontal dimensions) in the landscaping buffer that screens to some extent the Charlottesville Towers, an apartment house of no architectural distinction on North First St. that replaced a historic house and garden several decades back, and that is also our immediate neighbor. The bunker, which resembles an underground mausoleum, is close to the sidewalk and projects considerably above ground level. Had we or any of the other residents of the street proposed such an addition to the BAR, we would surely have been turned down. This conspicuously inappropriate, tarred concrete addition to the streetscape was not presented as a possible project to the neighborhood in advance, nor ever mentioned by the city engineers who were frequently on the scene for the sewer relining during the preceding months. We are thus forced to consider the likelihood that city officials recognized the bunker as a likely source of controversy and therefore constructed it in haste, to become in effect a *fait accompli*.

This feature has all the charm of a bomb shelter. We urge the city to remove it, applying the same design standards to its own additions to the design control district that it requires of residents.

Malcolm and Ruth Bell
433 North Street
Charlottesville

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Sarah Peaslee <peasleesarah@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 15, 2015 7:12 PM
To: Scala, Mary Joy
Subject: Box at Cville Towers, N. First st.

Dear Mary Jo Scala,

Please consider that I agree with the letter Patsy Carlson sent you regarding the 3 choices for the "Box" on the Charlottesville Towers Property at 511 N. 1st St. Let us at least try choice #1: landscaping to improve the appearance of the city's mistake instead of charging the tax payers for a slight cosmetic problem. Nobody that I have spoken to here at the Towers thinks there is a problem with the Box or that it is unsightly or goes against the historical appearance of this neighborhood. An attractive fence, bushes and flowers could turn the Box into a lovely sight for the whole neighborhood. Many already think it makes a nice bench.

Thanks for your consideration,
Sarah Peaslee



preservationpiedmont

P.O. Box 2803 | Charlottesville, VA | 22902

18 August 2015

Dear Ms. Scala and Members of the BAR:

This letter is in regard to the utility vault located at 511 North 1st Street. Utility infrastructure is a necessity that makes modern life possible. Advances in technology mean utilities do not have to be highly visible. Throughout the country, community groups and municipalities are making a concerted effort to bury electric lines and otherwise make utilities as invisible as possible while continuing to provide service. These efforts all strive to minimize the visual impact utilities have on the urban landscape.

Within the City Charlottesville and the County of Albemarle, efforts to minimize the visual impact of utilities are also underway. The streetscape projects in Crozet and Scottsville as well as past projects at Court Square and the Downtown Mall are perfect examples. Unfortunately, all such efforts are wasted when an improper utility placement occurs, such as what has happened at 511 North 1st Street. After reviewing the Certificate of Appropriateness the City of Charlottesville Public Utilities submitted to the BAR, we support mitigation Option 3 to lower the entire vault.

Had the vault project been presented to the BAR before installation, option 3 would clearly have been the preferred outcome. According to the City of Charlottesville Public Utilities letter to the BAR, such “precast vaults are typically installed underground, with an at-grade entry hatch.” If such an installation had taken place, there would be no issue now. However, the vault was not installed underground. Preservation Piedmont encourages the BAR to insist the City of Charlottesville Public Utilities implement option 3.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Spengler, President
Preservation Piedmont

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Galvin, Kathy
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 4:44 PM
To: Scala, Mary Joy
Cc: Jones, Maurice; Murphy, Mike; Ikefuna, Alexander; Mohr, Tim; DeLoach, Candace; Earnst, Emma; Kurt Keesecker; Knott, Laura; Miller, Melanie; Graves, Whit; Sarafin, Justin; Schwarz, Carl; Tree Commission; Smith, Dede; Emory, Bill; Keller, Genevieve; Brown, Craig
Subject: Re: Item 12, Meter Vault COA

Hello Mary Joy,

Thanks so much for the detailed response. This is a relief to us all. You do raise an important question however, about public utilities outside design control districts. My hope is that these installations are better controlled city wide in the wake of our code audit and revisions, as all of our streets (not just those in control districts) are public spaces for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike.

Best,
Kathy

Sent from my iPad

On Aug 19, 2015, at 11:09 AM, "Scala, Mary Joy" <scala@charlottesville.org> wrote:

After the vault was installed, it was brought to NDS' attention by neighbors, and we asked Public Works to make application after-the-fact, which they did. Last night the BAR was presented with three options regarding the vault. The result was that the BAR voted against option 1, an above-ground vault, and instead wanted Public Works to investigate a 4th option, to locate the vault under the sidewalk, where the previous vault had been located. The BAR said that, if and only if that option does not work, then they gave approval to either option 2 or 3 at Public Works' discretion. Option 2 and 3 both have the vault located completely underground, the only difference is the size of the vault.

Trip Stakem presented for Public Works, did a good job, and seemed to also prefer the BAR's preferred option 4.

It was an unusual occurrence for a public utility to be located on private property, and above ground. Any future above-ground installation on private property in a design control district should first require BAR approval. I would defer to others regarding public utilities outside design control districts.

Please let me know if you have other questions.

Mary Joy Scala, AICP
Preservation and Design Planner
City of Charlottesville
Department of Neighborhood Development Services
City Hall - 610 East Market Street
P.O. Box 911
Charlottesville, VA 22902
Ph 434.970.3130 FAX 434.970.3359
scala@charlottesville.org

From: Galvin, Kathy
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 10:06 AM
To: Jones, Maurice; Murphy, Mike; Ikefuna, Alexander
Cc: Mohr, Tim; DeLoach, Candace; Earnst, Emma; Kurt Keesecker; Knott, Laura; Miller, Melanie; Graves, Whit; Sarafin, Justin; Schwarz, Carl; Scala, Mary Joy; Tree Commission; Smith, Dede; Emory, Bill; Keller, Genevieve; Brown, Craig
Subject: Re: Item 12, Meter Vault COA

Good Morning Maurice, Mike and Alex,

Several weeks ago at a city council meeting, Gennie Keller brought this above grade structure on 1st Street to Council's attention, yet to my knowledge there has been no response from city staff to date. If I am wrong, my apologies and please let me know what was conveyed to Ms. Keller. Now, in the email below, Bill Emory has identified the design control district guidelines that apply to this situation.

Could you please respond to this apparent conflict between the city's actions and the city's policies, uncovered by Mr. Emory? I would especially like to know how the city intends to rectify this situation and prevent it from happening in the future.

Finally, I would like know if the city submitted plans and elevations of this structure to the BAR for review, before construction began. In particular, if no drawings were submitted and approved by the BAR, why was the city able to apply for a certificate of appropriateness COA after a structure had been built? Isn't a COA supposed to be based on the BAR's assessment of architectural drawings?

Many thanks and I look forward to your response.

Best,
Kathy
Kathleen M. Galvin, AIA
Charlottesville City Councilor

Sent from my iPad

On Aug 18, 2015, at 12:09 PM, "bill emory" <billemory@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Board of Architectural Review,

Streets are the warp and woof of the fabric that ties our City together. They are our place, our sustaining commons, the pathways that bind us together. In the last seventy years the design of the transport and utility functions of the street have gained dominance over the character and beauty of the public land that ties our neighborhoods together.

Item 12 on your agenda this evening deals with an above grade structure at 511 1st Street.

In 2008 the west side of 1st street was captured by Google in the view below.

<2008 1st ST google.jpg>

In 2010, the Charlottesville Towers Condo Association cut down two large *Q. palustris* (pin oaks) in the area between the sidewalk and their parking lot fence, these can be seen above in the photo above to the left and right of the water meter in the sidewalk.

<1st street stump #2.jpg>
(2010-one of the stumps)

<150701-meter-box-N-1st-ST.jpg>

Summer of 2015, the City has installed an above ground meter box, replacing the former below grade meter at this location.

The action by the City is antithetical to spirit and letter of the Guidelines and its recognition of the importance of streetscape, the contribution of character that derives from our streets to the surrounding historic district.

Elements in public ownership, such as sidewalks, streets, plantings, street furniture, and street lighting also contribute to the character of the district and are discussed in Chapter 6

*Site design and elements, Utilities and other site appurtenances:
1. Place overhead wires, utility poles and meters, antennae, trash containers, and exterior heat exchangers in locations where they are least likely to detract from the character of the site.*

The character of 1st street:

d. 1st and 2nd Streets: narrow streets, residential, small to moderate scale, broad mix of styles, porches, metal roofs, 1 1/2 to 2 stories, generally shallow setbacks and spacing with some variety, landscaping.

The resulting character of many of the residential streets in the historic districts is one of lush plantings and mature shade trees. While there may be much variety within the house types and styles along a particular street, the landscape character ties together the setting and plays an important role in defining the distinctiveness of the districts.

Chapter Six in the Guideline is Very Clear on the subject:

**Public Improvements Chapter 6 F. Traffic Signals and Utilities
2. Place utilities underground, if possible, or behind buildings.**

It is the customary practice of the Department of Public Works to place water meters underground. I am not aware of other above ground meter vaults in our City. This is an insupportable precedent.

The actions, in the past five years, by the Towers and by our City have severely

degraded this section of 1st Street.

In its COA application the City cited various factors to excuse the above grade installation of the meter vault. The items cited included “the vault is wider than the sidewalk”, existing 2” gas-line three feet from the curb, 16” retaining wall, warranty issues... These items do not preclude the customary practice of properly installing the meter box below grade.

The City, in its after the fact COA application says: *Because of the gas line in the street ROW and utility separation requirements, we can't put a new structure there (in the ROW).*

But, quoting from the City’s draft utility easement policy, one wonders whether the above ground meter vault, as a structure, would be allowed by the policy below?

1. No structures of any kind will be allowed within utility easements or within 10’ of any existing public utility main. This includes, but is not limited to rock outcroppings, retaining walls, buildings, and monument signs. The Public Works Department, at its sole discretion, will determine what constitutes a structure in applying this landscaping policy.

I respectfully request that you deny the City’s application for a COA and require them to pursue option 3.

Lower the entire vault - Remove the vault, excavate deeper and re-install at the same location, but lower, so that it's underground with a manhole lid access.

Ideally, they would consider restoring the entire bank for use by street trees and place the vault beneath the sidewalk and as necessary, underneath the street.

Additionally, I hope that you will encourage the applicant to consider that design and beauty have a profound effect on the health and welfare of the residents of this City, both in ADCs and in areas not so designated.

Thanks for your service!

Bill Emory

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