

Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC)

Staff Report for

1900 S. Eads Street- Crystal Houses 7 and 8 Major Site Plan Amendment

There are multiple ways to provide feedback and input on the proposal, County Staff is happy to accept comments in any form. Please use any method listed below.

Mail-in Comments:

Arlington County Planning Division

c/o Emma Martin

2100 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 700

Arlington, VA 22201

Contact Staff:

Contact the Arlington County Planning Staff reviewing this project either by phone or email

Emma Martin

703-228-3541 emartin@arlingtonva.us

Contact the SPRC Chair:

The SPRC Chair is a member of the Planning Commission and conducts all SPRC meetings

Tenley Peterson, Chair

tpeterson@commissions.arlingtonva.us

Crystal House 7 and 8 (SP #451)

1900 S. Eads Street

(RPC # 36-018-014)

Public Review and Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) Process:

- Community Outreach via email
 - March 2024 to present

- Hybrid Community Informational Meeting #1- September 5, 2024
 - Introductions
 - Staff and Applicant Presentations
 - Main Topics:
 - Site Design
 - Building Changes
 - Condition Changes
 - Public Comment
 - Wrap-up

- Hybrid SPRC Meeting #1 – September 26, 2024
 - Introductions
 - Staff and Applicant Presentations
 - SPRC Discussion Topics:
 - Site Design
 - Building Changes
 - Condition Changes
 - Public Comment
 - Wrap-up

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

MEETING AGENDA

Date: September 26, 2024

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: 2100 Clarendon Blvd. Room 316

SPRC STAFF COORDINATOR: Matthew Pfeiffer

Item 1. Crystal House 7 and 8 (SP#451)

1900 S. Eads Street

RPC #36-018-014

Planning Commission and County Board meetings to be determined

Emma Martin (CPHD Staff)

The Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) is comprised of Planning Commission members, representatives from other relevant commissions and several appointed citizens. The SPRC reviews all site plans and major site plan amendments requests, which are submitted to the County Board and the Planning Commission for consideration. The major responsibilities of the SPRC are the following:

1. Review site plan or major site plan amendment requests in detail.
2. Advise the Planning Commission by recommending the appropriate action in regard to a specific plan and any conditions, which it might determine to be necessary or appropriate.
3. Provide a forum by which interested citizens, civic associations and neighborhood conservation committees can review and comment on a particular plan, or the effects that the proposed project might have on the neighborhood.

In order to save copying costs, staff has selectively chosen the reduced drawings to be included in this package. The complete full size drawings are available for review in the Arlington County Zoning Office, 10th Floor, Courthouse Plaza, 2100 Clarendon Boulevard and also in the Central Library's Virginia Room, 1015 N. Quincy St., (703) 228-5990.

For more information on the Arlington County Planning Commission, go to their web site <http://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commission/>

For more information on the Site Plan public review process, go to the Arlington County Planning Division's web site on Development Proposals/Site Plans
http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/Planning/applications/site_plans/CPHDPlanningApplicationsSite_plansMain.aspx

To view the current Site Plan Review Committee schedule, go to the web site
<http://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commission/sprc/>

SUMMARY: The applicant, CH 1900 Associates LLC, proposes a Site Plan Amendment (#451) to modify conditions and to revise building and site elements for Crystal House 7 and 8.

Additional project details include:

- An increase of 21 units in three multifamily buildings (Crystal Houses 7 and 8)
- An increase of 42,651 square feet of residential gross floor area
- Residential parking ratio of 0.60 spaces per unit for the site plan
- An increase in building height by 12 feet (1 story)
- Requested modifications for: additional density, density exclusions and reduced parking ratio
- An associated [Zoning Ordinance Amendment](#) related to building height in Crystal City

BACKGROUND: The County Board approved Site Plan #451 in December 2019, and permitted the retention of two existing buildings (Crystal House 1 and 2), four new multifamily residential buildings (Crystal House 3-6), and three sticks of multi-family units (Crystal Houses 7 and 8) (Figure 3). This approval included 427 units of additional density above the base. This additional density was achieved through an extensive community benefits package including the transfer of the Crystal House 5 site and entitled development to the County to support future construction of committed affordable housing units; the creation of on-street protected bicycle lanes; the provision of on-site public spaces; other streetscape and utility improvements; and LEED Gold certification for the new buildings.

Following the 2019 approval, the site was acquired by the Washington Housing Conservancy, with the development rights under the approved site plan subsequently transferred to Acorn Development, LLC (a subsidiary of Amazon). On July 17, 2021, the County Board executed an [Option Agreement](#) (Option) with Acorn Development, LLC to enable the conveyance of an Option Agreement for the undeveloped portions of Crystal Houses (Crystal House 3-8 portions of the site plan). On December 17, 2022, the County Board executed a [Disposition and Development Agreement](#) (DDA) with Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, Inc. (APAH) and EYA Development, LLC (EYA) to enable them to serve as the master developer for the site, which included commitments that 75 percent of the new units provided would be committed as affordable housing units for 99 years (554 of the 739 total entitled but unbuilt Crystal Houses units) and that the entire project be completed by January 1, 2028. In the December 2022 DDA, Crystal House 7 and 8 was identified as a market rate development. The

DDA was subsequently amended by the County Board on May 13, 2023, ([DDA First Amendment](#)) to address timing revisions related to the first phase of development.

In [October 2023](#), Site Plan #451 was amended to increase the density by approximately 1% from what was approved in 2019. The additional density was achieved through the provision of committed affordable housing units in Crystal House 6. In [April 2024](#), Site Plan #451 was amended to revise building and site elements for Crystal House 3, to accommodate a change from market rate residential units to committed affordable units. As amended (in April 2024), Site Plan #451 allows for 1,664 total units for 16.95 acres (98.17 units/acre), including the retention of 828 units in the existing Crystal Houses 1 and 2 buildings. The base density for the site, per the Crystal City Sector Plan, is 72 units/acre.

The following provides additional information about the site and location:

Address / RPC: 1900 South Eads Street (RPC #36-018-014)

Neighborhood: This site is located within the Aurora Highlands Civic Association, is adjacent to the Crystal City Civic Association and is within the boundary of the Crystal City Metro Station Area, and the service area of the National Landing Business Improvement District.

Zoning: C-O-Crystal City

GLUP: “Medium Residential (37-72 du/ac.)” The site is within the boundaries of the Crystal City Coordinated Redevelopment District (Note 1).

Existing Land Use: The site is located at 1900 South Eads Street on the Crystal Houses block. The Crystal Houses block is bounded by 18th Street South to the north, South Eads Street to the east, 22nd Street South to the south, and South Fern Street to the west. The existing Crystal Houses buildings, two 12-story residential towers, were developed by-right in 1961 with a total of 828 units.

Figure 1: Aerial View of the Site



Source: Pictometry

Figure 2: Street View of the Crystal House 7 (left) and Crystal House 8 (right) site from S. Fern Street



Source: CPHD

Figure 3A and 3B: 2019 Proposed (3A) and Approved (3B) Illustrative Site Plan #451



Source: Applicant (3A) and 2019 Approval of SP #451(3B)

Proposed Development: The applicant is now proposing changes to the approved site, building, and conditions for the Crystal House 7 and 8 buildings which are summarized generally below:

Site Elements

- Revise parking garage layout
- Reduce parking ratio (remove 10 parking spaces)
- Revise courtyard layout to accommodate revised building footprint
 - Modify location of transformers

Building Elements

- Modify floor plans, and building layout (increase residential GFA by 42,651 square feet)
- Increase number of units (+21 units resulting in density of 99.41 units per acre)
- Increase building height (+1 story/12 feet)
- Façade material changes

Condition Changes

- Clarify requirements for construction timing (delivery of landscaped plaza between Crystal House 7 and 8 and delivery of masonry wall with first building built)
- Elements of civil engineering plan
- Flexibility to use EarthCraft or LEED certification for Crystal Houses buildings
- Affordable housing commitment to earn additional density
- Ability to use railing and or a masonry wall on 18th Street North

The following tables provide a statistical summary of the proposed amendments for SP #451:

Table 1: Approved and Proposed Number of Units in SP #451

Building	Approved Through October, 2023 (SPLA23-00039) and April, 2024 (SPLA23-00050)	Proposed SPLA24-00012	Proposed Change
CH-1 units	426	426	--
CH-2 units	402	402	--
CH-3 units	432	432	--
CH-4 units	222	222	--
CH-5 units	81	81	--
CH-6 units	80	80	--
CH-7 units	7	14	
CH-8 units	14	28	
Total Units	1,664	1,685	+21

Density: As described in the table above, the applicant is proposing to make changes to the site and building to increase the number of units in the three previously approved multifamily buildings (Crystal House 7 and 8), for a total of 42 residential units. The applicant is proposing to earn the 21 additional units via the dedication of more committed affordable units in the Crystal House 3 building which is a part of Site Plan #451.

With this site plan amendment, there are several zoning modifications requested.

Requested Zoning Modifications (SP #451):

- Bonus density to be achieved in conformance with ACZO §15.5
- Reduced residential and retail parking requirements
- Density exclusions for basement storage

Site Layout and Building Design: The footprint of the proposed residential buildings will be changing slightly to accommodate an increase in the number of units, and a back-to-back configuration of multifamily units with units facing internal to the site and units facing South Fern Street. In addition, the applicant has redesigned the parking garage to provide each unit with two parking spaces in a basement garage, with one compact space and one standard space per unit. The proposed design of the garage results in 10 fewer parking spaces than were previously approved, with a compact parking ratio of 50% for the Crystal House 7 and 8 buildings, with a compact parking ratio of less than 15% for the Crystal Houses site overall.

Table 2: Approved and Proposed Parking Site Plan #451

Building	Approved Parking Through April 20, 2024 (SPLA23-00050)	Proposed Parking (SPLA24-00012)	Proposed Parking Change
CH-1**	90	90	--
CH-2**	114	114	--
CH-3	389	389	--
CH-4	243	243	--
CH-5*	119	119	--
CH-6	37	37	--
CH-7	28	28	--
CH-8	66	56	-10
Surface Parking	62	62	--
Total Parking Spaces (not including CH-5)	1,029	1,019	-10
Total Parking Ratio (not including CH-5)	0.65 spaces per unit	0.60 spaces per unit	-.05 spaces per unit

* CH-5 parking (119 spaces) was not included in the parking ratio calculation with the initial approval of the Crystal Houses site plan in 2019 as that parking was permitted to be modified

administratively based on subsequent studies related to public parking on that portion of the site.

***Shared garage spaces for CH1 and CH2 in proposed garages Crystal Houses 3-8.*

Increase in building height: The applicant is proposing to modify the building layout from three 2-story multifamily buildings that face the street and include rear decks/patios to 3-story multifamily buildings that are back-to-back with front doors that face either South Fern Street or internal courtyards. The height of both the Crystal House 7 and 8 buildings has been revised to incorporate a third story to each of the townhomes that will include a loft with a roof terrace. The applicant states that the heights are measured from average site elevation, and due to shifting topography across the site, the full height of each structure is not entirely visible from neighboring homes. By increasing the height (as shown in Table 3), the applicant states they will achieve the critical mass of development necessary to construct this phase of Crystal Houses. Despite the proposed increase in height, the proposed multifamily units will remain comparable in size, massing, and scale with the single-family detached homes across South Fern Street to the west of the property.

Table 3: Proposed building height for each of the three building sticks of Crystal House 7 and 8

	Previously Approved	Proposed
Crystal House VII	34.68 feet	46.67 feet
Crystal House VIII A	26.18 feet	36.00 feet
Crystal House VIII B	26.18 feet	38.17 feet

Zoning Ordinance Amendment

While reviewing the site plan amendment request, staff identified an inadvertent barrier to realizing the County’s envisioned form of development along the Western edge of the Crystal City Coordinate Redevelopment District. The area in question represents a transitional zone separating the lower-scale neighborhood on the west side of South Fern Street from properties located to the east which include taller, existing buildings which are also eligible to deliver additional density through infill and future redevelopment. The western-most portion of the district, as described in the 2010 Crystal City Sector Plan, has been envisioned as consisting of 3-story buildings to complement existing by-right residences within the adjacent neighborhood located just outside of this district. In conjunction with this site plan amendment application, a Zoning Ordinance Amendment is being presented to the County Board to allow up to 3 stories on the C-O-Crystal City zoning district’s western edge in the area subject to this site plan amendment. The [proposed zoning ordinance amendment](#) will be considered by the Planning Commission and County Board at a time concurrent with an associated site plan amendment for the Crystal Houses development.

DISCUSSION: The following provides staff’s analysis of the proposal:

GLUP: The General Land Use Plan (GLUP) designation for the site is “Medium” Office Apartment-Hotel. The applicant is not requesting to change the GLUP designation. This designation allows for typical base density of up to 72 units per acre for residential. Moreover, the designation aligns with the existing zoning for the site (C-O-Crystal City), discussed further in the section below. The applicants proposal is consistent with the GLUP.

Zoning: The subject site is zoned C-O-Crystal City, and there is no proposal for a rezoning. As discussed in the GLUP section above, the permitted base density in this district is up to 72 units per acre residential. The County Board may approve additional density consistent with ACZO 15.5.9. The C-O-Crystal City Building Height Map allows for a maximum building height of 35 feet in the area subject to this site plan amendment, however the applicants proposal (46 feet) exceeds that limit. As mentioned in the Increase in Building Height and Zoning Ordinance Amendment sections above, a zoning ordinance amendment is proposed to allow up to 3 stories in the subject area will be considered by the Planning Commission and County Board at a time concurrent with an associated site plan amendment for the Crystal Houses development.

Conclusion: The applicant’s proposal is consistent with the ACZO (if amended) with proposed modifications to reduced parking ratios, density exclusions, and additional density. Staff supports the proposed modifications as they are in-line with applicable County policies. The reductions to the parking ratios are in conformance with the guidelines set forth in the County’s Off-Street Residential Parking Guidelines for multi-family residential projects within Metro areas; additionally, the applicant is requesting to exclude basement tenant storage that will not add to the building’s massing or design, consistent with other site plan projects and the Zoning Administrator’s Advice on GFA and Density Exclusions. Finally, the additional density proposed will be achieved via the commitment of additional affordable housing units in Crystal House 3, consistent with ACZO §15.5.9. Staff finds the proposed amendment is appropriate, as while it would revise certain elements of the Crystal House 7 and 8 buildings as previously approved, these generally involve limited changes to the previously approved buildings. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the site plan amendment, subject to the previously approved conditions and revised conditions.