

Alexandria approves Presbyterian church housing proposal

The Alexandria City Council has given final approval to a proposal by Fairlington Presbyterian Church and Wesley Housing Development Corporation to build 81 units of affordable housing on the back of the church's parking lot at 3846 King St.

All of the units would be reserved for low-income housing, with the maximum household tenant income not to exceed roughly \$66,000 for a family of four.

FCA President Guy Land wrote City of Alexandria staff indicating FCA's support for providing affordable housing and stating that FCA believes the proposal aligns well with the church's history and mission.

He also noted that Fairlington Presbyterian Church has been a valued and supportive member of the larger

Fairlington community, including being a sponsor of the Fairlington Farmers Market. A number of Fairlington residents attend Fairlington Presbyterian, with several of them serving in leadership roles at the church.

The FCA Board took no position on the specific design of the pending proposal, though it had heard no complaints about it from any Fairlington residents.

There would be 15 one-bedroom units, 55 two-bedroom units, and 11 three-bedroom units, along with community space and on-site management by Wesley. The building would have 83 parking spaces, mostly underground.

Tentative plans call for construction to begin in June 2020 and be complete by December 2021.

—Guy Land

Sheila Spillane Faulkner: A true Fairlington original resident

Former Fairlington resident Sheila Faulkner attended the October 20 event celebrating Fairlington's 75th anniversary and was the only one in attendance who had lived here when Fairlington was first built.

I was 11 years old when we moved into Fairlington. My father had offered his services to the Navy and he was made a Commander. We were living outside New York City but it took my father a year to find housing here.

I think we must have been the first family to move in to 4308 S. 36th St. The photo of me facing 4308 shows one spindly tree that my parents might have planted—they loved gardening. But I think the Virginia red clay stymied my mother having never gardened in red clay.



Sheila Faulkner in front of a newly planted tree on S. 36th St. Photo courtesy Sheila Faulkner.

A warehouse with building supplies was along Route 7 and across Route 7 was an abandoned air field with a control tower. The road that became Shirlington Highway did not exist but was a two-lane dirt road. Shirlington did not exist.

The townhomes have been reconfigured in the basement level since we lived there. There was a

door (with a padlock) which you passed through to a full basement running under the entire length of all the homes.

Most everyone in the area was in uniform (Navy/Marines, Air Force, Army, or Coast Guard). If you saw a male civilian in a business suit, he was called a \$1-a-year man—someone who had volunteered his services for the war effort as he had a skill or profession that was needed.

My friends and I were like the Little Rascals. We played cowboys and Indians, cops and robbers, and imitated the movies we saw on Saturday afternoon. I think our group consisted of seven or eight.

After the war we returned to New York. My parents and I made a return visit probably in 1946. By then, Shirlington had a post office and, I think, a dry cleaner.

—Sheila Faulkner



Sheila Faulkner, an original resident, attended the event. Pictured with FCA President Guy Land. Photo by Francine Vannicola.