

Fall 2013 HomeLifeStyle



Alexandria
Gazette Market



Foster Remodeling Solutions provides homeowners like you with an end-to-end remodeling solution that gives you the piece of mind in knowing that your project is going to be completed on time and on budget. No other remodeling company in the area offers you a complete remodeling solution all in one place. Foster has been providing home owners in Northern Virginia with well planned, stress free remodeling services for over 30 years. Let our experienced Design staff help you bring your homes possibilities to life!

CALL US TODAY! 703.550.1371



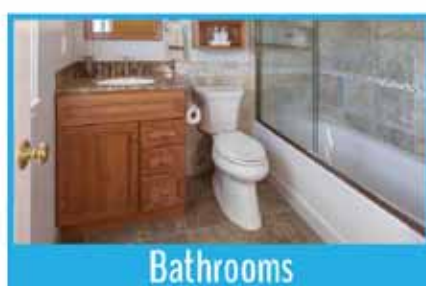
Foster Remodeling Solutions

FosterRemodeling.com

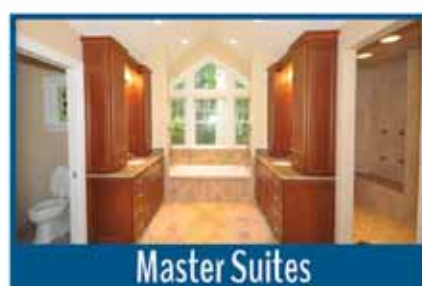
703.550.1371



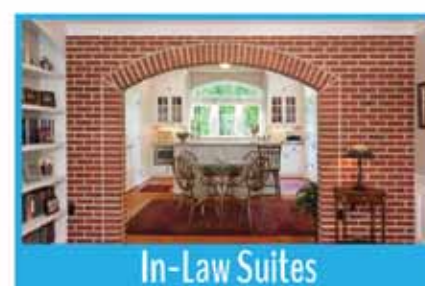
Kitchens



Bathrooms



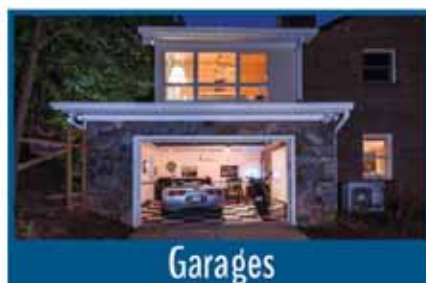
Master Suites



In-Law Suites



Additions



Garages



Generators



Home Maintenance

- Kitchens
- Bathrooms
- Master Suites
- In-Law Suites

- Additions
- Garages
- Basements
- Home Offices

Foster Remodeling Solutions, Inc.
7211-H Telegraph Square Drive
Lorton, VA 22079
703.550.1371

- Decks
- Screened Porches
- Sunrooms
- Fireplaces

- Generators
- Electrical Services
- Repairs
- Home Maintenance

NVAR Summit at GMU's Mason Inn

Complex shortage of homes for sale likely to persist.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Nationally syndicated columnist and moderator Kenneth R. Harney introduced the expert panel for the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR) 17th annual Economic Summit Thursday morning, Sept. 5.

Dr. David Crowe, chief economist and senior vice president of the National Association of Home Builders, joined economic experts David E. Versel, a senior research associate at the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis, and Dr. Lawrence Yun, senior economist for the National Association of Realtors. The panel addressed a full house — representing the nearly 10,000 realtor and “affiliate business members” that comprise the NVAR — on issues they believe best explain the current housing market and outlook, for both northern Virginia and the United States as a whole.

Though none could offer any “silver bullet” solutions to address all their concerns for housing, all agreed that growth in the market within a genuinely rebounding economy is sustainable, if only at a slower rate than the last year.

HARNEY, WHOSE COLUMN “The Nation’s Housing” appears in The Washington Post and in syndication, opened the program on a positive note, praising the “fortunate” market of the last year. And the increased sales, listings and home prices, he said, are demonstrative of a second, more generally sustainable phase of economic rebound that should give buyers and sellers alike hope.

But Harney was also quick to follow with qualifications and caveats to the optimism. “It may vary where you are,” he said, “but as far as I can tell, the entry-level buyer is still missing in action. They’re out there, but



Members of the Northern Virginia Realtors Association filled the conference hall at the Mason Inn on the campus of George Mason University for the 17th Annual NVAR Economic Summit.

they face hurdles. Student debt load is a big issue. And the job market is a huge constraint for the first-time buyer.”

VERSEL WAS THE FIRST panelist to speak, giving more detail regarding past, present and future economic forces in the DC metropolitan area as they relate to housing. A major concern for Northern Virginia is the decline in federal jobs and federal procurement. His data show a continuation of the trends, with one example being a \$14 billion decrease in spending from 2010 to 2017.

“There’s no question the primary economic driver of this region has always been Uncle Sam,” Versel said. “That said, we’re not Detroit. We haven’t been a one-horse town for the last 30 to 40 years. For example, Fairfax County has attracted Volkswagen North American Headquarters. We have that base of brainpower, and hopefully that’s leading into a new generation of economic growth.”

Versel sees a steady increase in building permits as a positive marker. Between 2012 and 2017, he forecasts 55,000 new jobs

being created in the housing industry, which should come as a package with increased construction and greater inventory.

Lack of inventory, Versel explained, is a key impediment to the more rapid strengthening of the market. Families or individuals looking to trade up have fewer options to do so, and first-time or entry-level buyers have fewer options to become involved at all. Versel attributes this mainly to the vast amount of homeowners in northern Virginia between the ages of 45 and 64.

“Nearly half of all homeowners in this region are in the Baby Boomer demographic,” he said. “Let that wash over you for a second.” Versel cited data from the 2010 Census.

“That’s in no small part why inventory remains a problem,” Versel continued. “They don’t want to retire, they don’t plan to retire. Some of it is financial and some of it is lifestyle: ‘I’m not old, I’m never going to get old, and I’m living here forever.’ They’re probably going to stay in these places for another 20 to 30 years. For younger people who want to buy houses in those areas, unless you have new construc-

tion, there just isn’t any inventory to purchase.”

CROWE ECHOED HARNEY’S CALL OUT of the missing entry-level buyers, citing national survey data from University of Michigan studies, among others. “No matter what market you’re in, the larger picture does matter. The government is going to react to what the rest of the economy’s going to do.”

Crowe said lifestyle choices — children of Baby Boomers moving in with their parents and deferring marriage, childbirth, etc. — and economic insecurity had and continue to have profound influence on household creation.

“We’re in store for enormous pent up demand,” said Crowe. “When people don’t know what their future’s going to be,” they’re less likely to move out of their parents’ basements, get divorced, have more children, etc. “That’s why we had such a surplus of houses. We didn’t build too many houses — people stopped moving out. That’s coming back again.”

During the last housing peak, Crowe said household creation at the national level was 1.4 million annually. In the slump, that figure dipped to half a million. According to Crowe, it should be at about 1.2 million.

With the slow but now steady growth of the national housing market — contributing a three percent out of a more ideal six percent to GDP — Crowe is optimistic more and more of this pent of demand will emerge as entry-level sales. But there are still potential lags: availability of credit can be limiting and discouraging, the cost of building materials is increasing.

YUN ALSO STRESSED the importance of job creation in helping prop up the missing entry-level segment. He specifically referenced students who, whether they “over-borrowed” or not, collectively feel the weight of loan debut. “What will most help them pay off debt or buy a home,” he said, “is really jobs. If they have jobs, student

SEE NVAR, PAGE 7

Northern Virginia Designers Awarded Rooms in Showhouse Event

Northern Virginia/metro area interior designers Kelley Proxmire of Kelley Interior Design and Wayne Breeden of E. Wayne Breeden Design are among 17 designers awarded rooms at the benefit Winchester Showhouse & Gardens, open to the public through Sept. 29.

The Showhouse features an 18th century home in the Shenandoah Valley, Long Green, known for its historic and architectural prominence and beautiful vistas.

Landscaping, shopping, artwork and designer sales complement the event, which benefits Blue Ridge Hospice, a not-for-profit hospice organization serving the Piedmont and Shenandoah Valley.

Purchase online at winchestershowhouse.com or by calling 540-313-9268.



Long Green, an 18th century home in the Shenandoah Valley, is made over to benefit Blue Ridge Hospice.

Alexandria
Gazette Packet

HomeLifeStyle

IS PRODUCED BY
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CALL 703-778-9431 OR EMAIL
SALES@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Hi Neighbor – Market's Up and Fall is Coming!



"According to a recent national poll, 53% said they believe *now* is a good time to begin improving the look and feel of their homes." —*Howz & Home 2013*

My family and I have lived and worked in your community for over 30 years. My carpentry work is meticulous and I take great pride in completing your projects on time and on budget — just ask my clients. Let me give you a free quote on those projects you've been dreaming about.

Phillip Norris – 30 Years of Finish Carpentry & Trim Work Expertise

Licensed • Bonded • Insured • References Provided with Pride
Ofc: 703.684.5215 • Cell: 703.403.2994
Finishcarpentry-1@comcast.net



Turn unwanted valuables into CASH!

Powerful eBay selling for households and businesses
Single Items • Full Liquidations • Buy-outs

Drop off or call for a pick-up...we'll do the rest!

ezauctioning.com

1320 Prince St., Alexandria, VA 22314 • 703.778.6440

Hurry!

Due to popular demand, held over until September 30, 2013.

Personal Loan Rates
As Low As

6.9% APR*
Up to 60 months



Apply today to get money for home improvements, consolidate other debt, or whatever you need!

- Fixed rates from 6.9% - 14.9% APR*
- Limit up to \$25,000
- Terms up to 60 months
- No collateral required

Apply online at www.cofcu.org, call us, or visit a branch.



*APR=Annual Percentage Rate. Rates effective 8/1/2013 and are subject to change at any time. Your rate may vary based on credit history. All personal loans are subject to a minimum monthly payment of \$45.00. See cofcu.org for full details. Most local area residents can bank with us. Federally insured by NCUA.

Home LifeStyle

Top-to-Bottom Makeover Embraces Longterm Horizons

The Hollis family wanted a house that would work better today — and long into the future.

BY JOHN BYRD

Sometimes it's not limited square footage that makes a house feel inadequate — it's how that square footage is configured.

Take, for example, the circa 1970s Vienna split-level Andre and Katy Hollis purchased in 2005. With more than 3,200 square feet of living space that included four bedrooms, three bathrooms and a large family room, most would consider the house sufficient — even enviable — as the primary home for a family of four.

True, the previous owners had been empty-nesters, which partly explained why there was a soaking tub instead of a shower in an upstairs bathroom allocated to two pre-teen boys.

Still, the structure's two-level main block seemed to have capacity to spare. There was a guest room; a full bathroom on the first floor; a home office.

In fact, it was the lack of need for changes that had prompted the Hollis' to buy the house in the first place.

But while recuperating from an accident a few years ago, Katy Hollis began to reassess. "I decided that I really like our neighborhood and that we could stay in the house

indefinitely. But I also saw that I had been ignoring a lot of things that didn't work for us. And the shortcomings were even more obvious when I looked ahead."

All of this sounded familiar to Mindy Mitchell, the Certified Aging-In-Place Specialist at Sun Design Remodeling. Katy Hollis called in to talk over some ideas.

"In the last two decades, designers have learned a lot about how to customize a traditional production house floorplan for longterm use," Mitchell said. "Size is less important than how rooms are purposed and configured. The goal is to create a plan that will logically support priorities."

As discussions with Mitchell evolved, Katy Hollis unveiled her larger agenda. To make the house more functional for both current and foreseeable needs, the homeowner envisioned a series of focused revisions: a spacious first floor bedroom; a gourmet kitchen; television-viewing that's not in the midst of other entertainment zones; a guest suite with dedicated bath; an indoor-outdoor segue to the beautifully wooded backyard.

The new plan had to serve a variety of concurrent scenarios. There should be beautifully articulated front-facing rooms that would support the occasional dinner party. They needed a family gathering area for daily meals and

everyday interaction. The new kitchen should be equipped with a gas range, a wine refrigerator and generous food preparation surfaces.

"I found it reassuring to talk about the house as a place we might occupy 30 years from now," Katy Hollis said. "I thought that we probably had the necessary square footage to make the changes I had in mind, but there were many space planning considerations we needed to work out carefully."

Certainly, the current plan was problematic.

The entryway foyer was flanked by an L-shaped galley kitchen to the left and a family room four steps down on the right.

One could proceed to the back of the house from the galley kitchen to a rear dining room, or from the parallel foyer directly to a small sitting room adjacent to the dining room.

The arrangement often led to bottlenecks. At parties, guests would circulate back to the family room after dinner creating traffic jams in the foyer.

Moreover, a promising view of the pretty backyard was hampered by undersized windows — which



BEFORE: Kitchen

The former galley kitchen offered few supports for inspired food preparation.



Moving TV-viewing from the living room to an upgraded lower level has made the first floor far more functional while adding an element of privacy to the new master suite.

made the back of the house too dark.

SUCH PROBLEMS were equally apparent upstairs. The front-facing master bedroom suite was large enough — but the master bathroom could only be accessed through a closet/changing area, and the plan lacked a walk-in closet and privacy. Adding to the inconvenience, the only shower available for second floor guest room was one flight down, on the

More

Sun Design Remodeling frequently holds workshops on home remodeling topics at their office in Burke. Visit www.SunDesignRemodelingInc.com or call 703-425-5588.

first floor.

"Our challenge was comprehensively re-imagining how space could be allocated while staying inside the envelope of the house," Mitchell said.

Interestingly, a decision to move TV-watching away from the front-facing family room set the reconfiguration process in motion.

"We saw the rooms in the front of the house as a suite that would better serve all formal entertainment needs," Mitchell said. "Situating the TV in the newly remodeled basement allowed us to fully convert the family room into a more formal living room and eliminate the marginally useful sitting room."

Freeing-up the 17-foot-by-8-foot sitting area in the back of the house, Mitchell and team next shifted the dining room to the front (across the foyer from the new living room), allocating 170 square feet in the rear for a gourmet



PHOTOS BY BRIAN BURNS

Following an accident, the Hollis family decided to reconfigure their Vienna home for both improved day-to-day functioning, and long-term use. From left: Alex, Max, Katy and Andre in the newly remodeled family room.



BEFORE: Basement

cooking and clean up tasks. "It's much easier to both cook and tend to guests," Katy Hollis said. "The dining room, foyer and new living room are well-unified aesthetically; guests don't even need to see the kitchen."

Re-purposing bedrooms and bathrooms also figured prominently in the makeover. Katy Hollis wanted both a guest room with dedicated bath and a larger, more private master bedroom suite.

"We had to scrutinize the footprint closely," Mitchell said. "Fortunately, there were first level utility rooms adjacent to the family room we could either delete or reassign in our search for space to

accommodate a first level master suite." Relocating an upstairs hall bath, thus, gave Mitchell the option to move the laundry to the second floor. The former master bedroom suite now becomes the coveted guest quarters. A second floor corner bedroom has been transformed into a bathroom for the two boys complete with a double sink vanity.

With the laundry now out of the way, Mitchell and team re-deployed 300 square feet on the rear of the first level for a spacious and very private master bedroom suite that includes a master bath and generous walk-in closets.

A home office behind glass-facing French doors opens directly into the redecorated living room. The first level bath has been re-fashioned as a handsomely appointed guest powder room.

"It's a terrific solution in every detail," Katy Hollis said. "And knowing we've already made some solid decisions about the future is really quite satisfying."

SUN DESIGN INVITES YOU TO OUR REMODELED HOME TOUR IN GREAT FALLS!

Saturday, Sept. 14th, 10am-4pm

9619 Locust Hill Drive, Great Falls, VA 22066



REINVENT YOUR HOME TO ENRICH YOUR LIFE
Come see first hand how redesigning existing space created better function, flow, and light in this gourmet kitchen with contrasting center island, including maple cabinetry and saddle stone glass blend tiling, as well as a mudroom, transitioning from garage, to include reconfigured laundry space.

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors:



Ogun Heporen
703-204-2222
FairfaxMarble.com

SUN DESIGN

design/build | additions | kitchens | baths | basements | outdoor spaces
703-425-5588 SunDesignInc.com info@SunDesignInc.com

Is your home ready for winter?



Old Man Winter will blow into town before you know it; is your home ready?

We are now scheduling work for this fall. Call us today!



Call us for a **FREE ESTIMATE!**

703-684-7702

www.techpainting.com

From **MyerEmco** to
MYERCONNEX
YOUR LIFE. BETTER CONNECTED.

MyerConnex.com



Control it all with the same smart phone and tablet devices you use every day.

- **Home Theater**
- **Wireless Audio**
- **Lighting & Climate Control**
- **Home Computer Networks**

MyerConnex evolved from MyerEmco –
a company that served the Washington area for 55 years.

Contact us today for an in-home consultation
Call us at 240-888-4300, e-mail us at info@myerconnex.com
or visit us at www.myerconnex.com


We're hiring experienced installers. Help us grow.



PLANNING A FAMILY REUNION?

Reunite with your loved ones
at the Holiday Inn Alexandria S.W.

Bring your family here and let us show you how
memorable hospitality and history can be.



Holiday Inn Alexandria S.W.

2460 Eisenhower Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 960-3400
www.holidayinnalexandria.com

Book Today
Call Tracie
(703) 740-4217

Home LifeStyle

Condo Renovations

As sales of condominiums grow, so does demand for luxury renovations.

More people are moving from leafy, sprawling suburbs to more urban areas, neighborhoods both in the city and in Northern Virginia that offer close proximity to restaurants, jobs, cultural activities and Metro.

Sales of condominiums in Northern Virginia are up, with growth in sales of condos outpacing both single-family homes and townhouses in the past year, according to the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors.

Both "echo boomers" (30-and-under) and retiring baby boomers want smaller homes near public transportation, shopping and workplaces, driving up the demand for condominiums, Lisa Sturtevant, deputy director of GMU's Center for Regional Analysis reported to NVAR in March.

With the growth in demand for condominiums comes growth in demand for condominium renovations.

One local company BOWA, a residential remodel and construction firm based in McLean, is responding to that trend by bringing on a new project leader, Mark Miller, with expertise in condo remodeling and commercial construction. Miller and BOWA say they are responding to the demand to push the boundaries of luxury condo transformation.

Most upscale condominium buyers will select a location where they want to live first, and then search for a condo to buy, said Miller, who is an Arlington resident, often in older buildings.

"Condos come in all different sizes and flavors," Miller said. "Years ago people didn't even think of renovating a condo."

People moving from larger suburban homes often are not satisfied with the smaller room sizes, utilitarian kitchens and cramped bathrooms that are typical of many condominiums.

"But now we can change the footprint from smaller rooms to open layouts," Miller said, creating room for luxurious kitchens open to spacious entertaining areas, luxurious bathrooms, audio/visual spaces and even outdoor spaces.

When renovating a condominium, Miller says they see some very demanding cooks. "They want high-end appliances. ... What clients want for their finishes is high end residential."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BOB NAROD PHOTOGRAPHY/BOWA

This renovation features custom woodwork and built-ins to maximize space.

More

Contact BOWA's McLean office at 703-734-9050 or see www.bowa.com for more information.

"Ten years ago, it was not even possible to produce that environment in a condo."

Some clients are renovating even in brand new buildings. "People will buy two units and combine them. Sometimes they are looking for different space than the [condo developers] are willing to do," Miller said.

RENOVATING CONDOMINIUMS is fundamentally different than renovating a single-family home, and it requires very different expertise, even if the desired outcome inside might look similar.

"It's a completely different animal," Miller said. The permitting and approval process is far more stringent, requiring commercial standards in many cases.

"The normal renovation process is completely different in a condominium building. The structural systems are different," Miller said. "The stakes are so much higher."

In a condominium renovation, you might have 10 very close neighbors who are concerned about noise. Just the installation of a dryer vent is likely to require a permit. Delivery of building materials and taking care of debris are more complex. Tapping into the heating and hot water systems in a condominium building requires different expertise than most single-family home builders have.

Miller recommends that anyone planning to buy a condo to renovate consult an experienced condo remodeler before they buy.

An experienced company can help guide the design with a realistic sense of what they actually can do and what sort of budget the project would require, can help with the permitting process.

"By understanding what's possible, we can come in very early, so if someone is contemplating a purchase, we can evaluate 'is this one remodeling friendly?' By getting on board early with a customer we can avoid some of the pitfalls," Miller said. "We can offer some design ideas for some things they haven't even thought of."

Renovating a condo is completely different, but it doesn't have to be bad, he said. You can create "brand new luxurious space out of something that wasn't that way before."



Mark Miller

JOE PARISI PHOTOGRAPHY

Sun Design Named One of U.S.'s Fastest Growing Private Companies

Sun Design Remodeling Specialists, Inc., of Fairfax, was named by Inc. Magazine as one of America's fastest-growing private companies. This is the fourth time the magazine has included Sun Design on its annual Inc.5000 list.

Sun Design was one of the Virginia companies to be included on the list this year.

Companies are chosen for the list based on their growth rate for the previous three years; Sun Design's revenue was up 9 percent over that period. A statement released by the magazine said, "The elite group you've now joined has, over the years, included companies such as Microsoft, Timberland, Vizio, Intuit,

Jamba Juice, Oracle, and Zappos.com." The awards will be formally presented at The 32nd Annual Inc. 5000 Conference and Awards Ceremony, Oct. 10-12, 2013 at the Gaylord National.

Bob Gallagher, president of Sun Design, said, "Being recognized by Inc. Magazine for this national award four times is a great testimony to the success of our company, the creativity and drive of our entire team and our reputation as a company that clients love to work with. We're very pleased to be included among such great companies."

Sun Design, celebrating its 25th year, has been the recipient of dozens of industry awards. Each year, Sun Design shows off its work during a series of home tours and other special events. Visit www.sundesigninc.com or call 703-425-5588. Sun Design is located at 5795 B Burke Centre Parkway, in Burke.

NVAR Summit at GMU's Mason Inn

FROM PAGE 3

loans are not a problem. It's about job creation. We are creating jobs, but at a slow pace. This is hindering young people in the country."

But like all the panelists, Yun's presentation was peppered with plusses and minuses. A positive for employment seekers, as well as their potential employers, is the concept of "clustering," according to Yun. Clustering takes place when a sizable number of skilled workers congregate in a certain area and that attracts employers, which attracts more skilled work-

ers.

Yun applauded the multi-skilled workforce in and around DC as "a clustering effect beginning to grow." He believes more businesses will be drawn to the workforce, independent of government, which could in turn help create more jobs in the region.

Finally, noting the rising population of renters, Yun implored the audience (to pass along to their clients) to be wary of inflation over the next year. "We may actually get a 6 percent mortgage next rate next year, if inflation rate pops out. It's something to watch carefully."

Tuckpointing: New life for historic brick buildings



3rd Annual Fair Trade Rug Event

September 12-15

More than 300 handknotted oriental rugs made by fairly paid adults.

FREE Rug Seminar
September 12, 7:00 pm

Call to reserve your seat!
915 King Street Old Town
703-684-1435

Share the fair trade difference.

TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES

My Door to Homeownership is always open . . .



10012 Willow Ridge



1st St NW DC**



322 N Columbus Street



110 Princess Street



1229 Portner Road

Recent Listings & Sales
1006 N Royal St
1143 3rd St NE

5107 Sutton Pl
5827 Berkshire Ct
2608 S 1st St

4717 Old Dominion Dr
433 Earl St
206 Martin Ln

1106 Portner Rd
1109 Portner Rd
1136 Portner Rd



35 Years in Real Estate
RECOGNIZED, RESPECTED, RECOMMENDED,
call Renee Reymond to Buy or Sell!

703.507.5330

**Under Contract

*MRIS Stat



LUXURY LIVING FOR EVERY STYLE



605 Ft. Williams Parkway • Alexandria, Virginia

Fine Seminary Ridge home with impeccable updates and beautiful views into the large, secluded backyard.



9412 Macklin Court • Alexandria, Virginia

Stately Georgian Colonial with fantastic backyard.



603 West View Terr. • Alexandria, Virginia

Spectacular two story renovation with gourmet kitchen, open floor-plan and luxurious master suite



208 Virginia Avenue • Alexandria, Virginia

One of Alexandria's finest estates located on 2 acres. Prominent craftsmen and celebrity designers have made this home a luxurious escape.



703.362.3221 | homes@thegoodhartgroup.com | www.thegoodhartgroup.com



#1 Agent at McEneaney Associates
(Alexandria's #1 Real Estate Company)



109 S. Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.549.9292

LEADING
REAL ESTATE
COMPANIES
of THE WORLD

LUXURY
PORTFOLIO
INTERNATIONAL