

Docket Item # 14  
DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2002-0037  
CITY PARKING LOT (DATATEL SITE)

Planning Commission Meeting  
November 7, 2002

**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request for a development special use permit, with site plan, to construct a parking lot.

**APPLICANT:** City of Alexandria -  
Department of Transportation & Environmental Services  
by Emily Baker, City Engineer, and  
Department of General Services,  
by Peter Geiling, Deputy Director

**LOCATION:** 3612-3704 Mt. Vernon Avenue  
(Previous Datatel Building site)

**ZONE:** CL/Commercial Low

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**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, NOVEMBER 7, 2002:** On a motion by Mr. Komoroske, seconded by Mr. Dunn, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the request subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and staff recommendations, with an amendment to condition #1 and addition of condition #17. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

**Reason:** The Planning Commission generally agreed with the staff analysis, changing condition #1 as requested by staff to respond to St. Rita's concerns, and adding condition #17 to assure that the landscaping in the lot is installed according to the proposed plan, and maintained over time. The chairman noted that as staff continues to work with the community on parking restrictions for the lot, consideration should be given for longer parking periods in the evening in order to accommodate patrons of the Birchmere.

**Speakers:**

Maria Wisoaski spoke in support,

Barbara Hayes, 3603 Old Dominion, spoke in support but requested overnight parking for residents.

Kevin Beatley, nearby resident, spoke in support but requested overnight parking.

Ellen Marie Golden, 142 Dale Street, spoke in support but requested overnight parking.



STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. **CONDITION AMENDED BY PLANNING COMMISSION:** No more than **18** ~~14~~ spaces shall be reserved for use by St. Rita's church. Those spaces shall be marked as reserved with pavement markings. (P&Z)
2. Provide all pedestrian and traffic signage to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services and Planning and Zoning. (T&ES)
3. Show existing and proposed street lights and site lights. Indicate the type of fixture, and show mounting height, and strength of fixture in Lumens or Watts. Provide manufacturer's specifications for the fixtures. Provide lighting calculations to verify that lighting meets city standards and are located to prevent excessive spillover lighting and glare from adjacent properties. (T&ES)
4. All stormwater designs that require hydraulic analysis of pressure hydraulic systems and/or inclusion and design of flow control structures must be sealed by a professional engineer registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia. If applicable, the Director of T&ES may require resubmission of all plans that do not meet this standard. (T&ES)
5. All required permits from Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Virginia Marine Resources must be in place for all project construction and mitigation work prior to release of the final site plan. (T&ES)
6. In final engineering design full capture of the water quality volume must be achieved, or a waiver shall be approved for this site. (T&ES)
7. Provide a drainage map for the area flowing to the chosen Best Management Practices (BMP) facility, including topographic information and storm drains. (T&ES)
8. The stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) required for this project shall be constructed and installed under the direct supervision of the design engineer or designated representative. The design engineer shall make a written certification to the City that the BMP(s) are constructed and installed as designed and in accordance with the approved Final Site Plan. (T&ES)

DSUP #2002-0037  
CITY PARKING LOT (previous Datatel Bldg site)

9. For any surface-installed BMPs, i.e., Bio-Retention Filters, Vegetated Swales, etc., employed on-site, descriptive signage for the BMP is required to be installed to the satisfaction of the Director T&ES. (T&ES)
10. The stormwater collection system is part of the Four Mile Run watershed. All stormwater inlets shall be duly marked to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES. (T&ES)
11. Plan must demonstrate to the satisfaction of director of T&ES that adequate stormwater outfall is available to the site or else developer is to design and build any on or off site improvements to discharge to an adequate outfall. (T&ES)
12. All Traffic Control Device design plans, Work Zone Traffic Control plans, and Traffic Studies shall be sealed by a professional engineer registered in the State of Virginia. (T&ES)
13. All driveway entrances and sidewalks in public right-of-way or abutting public right-of-way shall meet City standards. (T&ES)
14. Replace existing curb and gutter, sidewalks, and handicap ramps that are in disrepair or broken. (T&ES)
15. Prior to the release of the final site plan, provide a Traffic Control Plan for construction detailing proposed controls to traffic movement, lane closures, construction entrances, haul routes, and storage and staging. (T&ES)
16. A "Certified Land Disturber" must be named on the Erosion and Sediment Control sheets prior to release of the final site plan in accordance with Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Guidelines. (T&ES)
17. **CONDITION ADDED BY PLANNING COMMISSION: Landscaping shall be provided pursuant to the proposed plan document, and all landscaping shall be properly maintained and replaced if damaged. (PC)**

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Description of the Proposal**

The applicant, City of Alexandria, is requesting a development special use permit with site plan to construct a 71 space parking lot on the former Datatel building site and on two adjacent privately-owned lots. A special use permit is required for the proposed lot in the CL zone.

The three lots front on Mount Vernon Avenue and have rear access to a public alley which connects Mount Vernon Avenue to Russell Road.

The 15,000 sq. ft. city lot is located between the two privately owned lots. The lot north of the city-owned parcel, an existing parking lot owned by Thomas J. Welsh, Bishop of Arlington, contains 7,500 sq. ft., and is utilized for parking by St. Rita's Church, which abuts the property across the alley to the rear. The parcel to the south is owned by the 3600 Mount Vernon Avenue LLC, contains 7,500 sq. ft. and is vacant. Each of the adjoining owners have allowed the City to lease their parcels for the parking lot use.

### **Project History**

The proposal for the parking lot grew out of the Upper Potomac West/Arlandria planning effort undertaken by the City over the last several years. During the planning process, the vacant and boarded Datatel building was identified as having a strong, negative impact on upper Mount Vernon Avenue, and specifically on investment interest in the area. In addition, insufficient public parking for patrons of businesses was cited as a major factor negatively affecting economic development in the area. The long term redevelopment concept included in the Upper Potomac West Task Force Plan for the area identifies the Datatel site as a good location for a public parking structure, serving existing and future retail uses in the area. The parking structure can be designed to be faced with retail uses and to be part of a larger mixed use project developed on the Safeway/Datatel parcels.

Because a large mixed use redevelopment project is unlikely to occur for several years, the City sought to realize its goals for the area, at least partially, in the interim. Specifically, by demolishing the Datatel building, the negative impact of the massive, unfriendly Datatel structure is removed; by using the land as a surface parking lot, the need for parking is addressed. The purchase of the land also involves the City directly in the eventual redevelopment program for the area.

The issue was discussed by City Council at several junctures over the last year, and the purchase of the property approved by resolution on June 25, 2002. The City purchased the building on August 19, 2002, and thereafter arranged for its demolition. This application then is the next step in the process by which the land is developed for an interim parking lot.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

The proposal utilizes the total 30,000 sq.ft. of land area to accommodate a single parking lot with 71 spaces. The parking lot will be built and controlled by the City of Alexandria.

The proposed lot will bring substantial streetscape improvements along the frontage of Mount Vernon Avenue. Currently, there are three curbcuts along the frontage of these properties; these three curbcuts are replaced with a single curbcut under the plan. The existing 4' sidewalk along the frontage will be widened to 10', including 4' deep tree wells for six new street trees. A substantial landscape strip, 18' in depth, separates the pavement of the parking lot from the sidewalk, and a shrub hedge wraps around the entire parking lot, helping to screen the lot from the street, the alley and adjoining properties. Additional trees are planted along the north and south property boundaries and in landscape medians located within the parking lot. The proposed tree canopy on the site of 13,750 square feet will far exceed the 7,500 square feet required.

## **Circulation**

Access to the lot from Mount Vernon Avenue will be via a single curb cut and driveway entrance that will be located opposite the curb cut for the Birchmere. This position was selected because it will provide the safest condition for drivers simultaneously exiting the two lots. One access point will also be provided at the rear of the proposed lot into the adjoining alley.

## **Parking Lot Operation**

Parking times and restrictions on the lot will be similar to those in force for the on-street parking along Mount Vernon Avenue, with the exception that overnight parking in the lot will not be permitted. The restrictions will permit two hour parking between 9 am and midnight, Monday through Friday, with no time restriction between 6 am and Midnight on Saturday and Sunday. These restrictions will be communicated by signs placed within the parking lot. The restrictions in the lot are intended to mirror the controls that now existing on Mount Vernon Avenue near the lot.

Fourteen of the parking spaces at the northern end of the lot will be reserved for use by St Rita's school personnel. These 14 spaces replace the 14 spaces on the existing St. Rita's lot, which are being absorbed into the larger parking lot. In addition, it is anticipated that church patrons will be able to use the lot on Sundays.

**Lighting**

The parking lot will be lit with fixtures on 15' tall poles. The lighting will allow for safe use in the evenings and will provide that added benefit of distributing light generally in an area which is currently felt by many to be uncomfortably dark.

**Conclusion**

The proposed parking lot, combining private and public land, and for use by the community, the church and area business customers, provides a positive interim use of the site. While over the long term surface parking is not appropriate along Mount Vernon Avenue, visually, this interim lot will improve the streetscape along this stretch of Mount Vernon Avenue by bringing sidewalk and significant landscape improvements. Staff recommends approval.

**STAFF:** Eileen P. Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;  
Barbara Ross, Deputy Director  
Kimberley Johnson, Chief, Development;  
Rob McLeod, Urban Planner.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Transportation & Environmental Services:

- C-1 Plans and profiles of utilities and roads in public easements and/or public right-of-way must be approved prior to release of the plan.
- C-2 All drainage facilities must be designed to the satisfaction of T&ES. Drainage divide maps and computations must be provided for approval.
- C-3 All utilities serving this site to be underground.
- C-4 Provide site lighting plan to meet minimum city standards.
- C-5 Plan shall comply with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act in accordance with Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for storm water quality control.
- C-6 The applicant shall comply with Alexandria's Erosion and Sediment Control Code, Section 5, Chapter 4 and provide a phased erosion and sediment control plan consistent with grading and construction.
- C-7 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line.

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Three handicapped accessible parking spaces shall be provided for this parking lot.
- C-2 Provide handicapped access to the public sidewalk from the accessible parking spaces.
- C-3 Emergency vehicle access through this site to the rear of St. Rita's shall be maintained.
- C-4 Show the location of the nearest fire hydrant.

Health Department:

No comments were received from this department

Police Department:

No comments were received from this department.

Historic Alexandria (Archaeology):

- F-1 During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Hume Spring was located in Mt. Vernon Avenue adjacent to this property. Archaeological evidence of this spring may become apparent during demolition of the existing structure and subsequent development on this lot.
- C-1 Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any demolition or ground disturbing activity (such coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds.
- C-2 The above statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (Arborist):

No comments were received from this department.

Rob McLeod

APPLICATION for  
DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL USE PERMIT with SITE PLAN  
DSUP # 2002-0037

DATATEL SITE - CITY PARKING LOT

PROJECT NAME: 3700 Mount Vernon Avenue Parking Lot (Formerly Datatel)

PROPERTY LOCATION: 3612 - 3704 Mount Vernon Avenue

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 007.00-08-11, <sup>10+</sup> 007.00-08-03 <sup>15.01-4-</sup> ZONE: CL

APPLICANT Name: City of Alexandria

Address: 301 King Street, Alexandria VA 22314

PROPERTY OWNER Name: See attached Property Owner List

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL: The City of Alexandria proposes construction

of a 70 space public parking lot on the former Datatel site and abutting  
properties at 3612 and 3704 Mt. Vernon Avenue.

MODIFICATIONS REQUESTED: Site modifications include grading; site, con-  
struction of asphalt parking lot, planting of trees and landscape buffer,  
installation of parking lot lighting.

SUP's REQUESTED: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE UNDERSIGNED** hereby applies for Development Site Plan, with Special Use Permit, approval in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

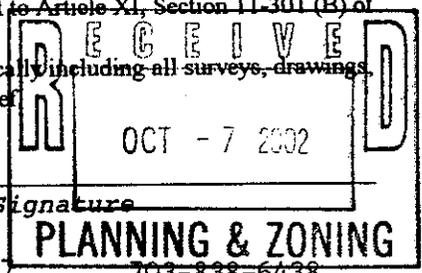
**THE UNDERSIGNED**, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-301 (B) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

**THE UNDERSIGNED** also attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required of the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of his knowledge and belief.

Emily Baker, City Engineer  
Print Name of Applicant or Agent

301 King Street, Box 67  
Mailing/Street Address

Alexandria, VA 22314  
City and State Zip Code



\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
703-838-4327 Telephone # 703-838-6438 Fax #

October 7, 2002  
Date

**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - OFFICE USE ONLY**

Application Received: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fee Paid & Date: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Received Plans for Completeness: \_\_\_\_\_  
Received Plans for Preliminary: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION - PLANNING COMMISSION: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION - CITY COUNCIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan (DSUP) # 2002-0037

All applicants must complete this form.

Supplemental forms are required for child care facilities, restaurants, automobile oriented uses and freestanding signs requiring special use permit approval.

1. The applicant is the (check one):

Owner       Contract Purchaser

Lessee       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent.

City of Alexandria

The Most Reverend Paul S. Lovende, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington

3600 Mount Vernon, LLC

If property owner or applicant is being represented by an authorized agent such as an attorney, realtor, or other person for which there is some form of compensation, does this agent or the business in which the agent is employed have a business license to operate in the City of Alexandria, Virginia?

Yes.      Provide proof of current City business license

No.      The agent shall obtain a business license prior to filing application, if required by the City Code.

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

2. The applicant shall describe below the nature of the request in detail so that the Planning Commission and City Council can understand the nature of the operation and the use, including such items as the nature of the activity, the number and type of patrons, the number of employees, the hours, how parking is to be provided for employees and patrons, and whether the use will generate any noise. If not appropriate to the request, delete pages 4-7.  
*(Attach additional sheets if necessary)*

See Attached

## **3612 - 3704 Mount Vernon Avenue DSUP Narrative Description**

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The City of Alexandria proposes to develop an approximately seventy (70) space public parking lot on the site formerly home to the Datatel Building and the abutting properties owned by the Weissberg Corporation and Saint Rita's Church. The standard parking spaces are 9' X 18' while the handicapped spaces will be 8.5' X 20' with a five foot access provided. All the drive aisles are 22' wide. Access to the lot is provide via Mount Vernon Avenue and the alley running behind the properties.

The parking lot is designed with a BMP, grass swale that runs across the street frontage of the site, treats all of the runoff from the site. The City's Environmental Quality Division authorized use of limited curb cuts at the north end of the lot, near the swale entrance, to ensure all runoff flows to the swale. The treated water will outfall to the gutter along Mt. Vernon Ave. This is necessary because the nearest storm drain collector is over 150' distant to the south and can not be reached with a connecting pipe.

The landscaping concept will accommodate the BMP, which will require consolidation of more of the unpaved surface along the lower edge of the lot. Trees will be spaced at 30-foot intervals along the street frontage. They will be planted in the center of a well that is 4 feet wide and 8 feet long. A brick paver sidewalk along Mount Vernon Avenue will be 10 feet wide, measured from the back of the curb. Finally, the lot will be illuminated per specifications determined by the Department of Planning and Zoning.

The proposed parking restrictions within the lot is currently three-hour parking between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m., Sunday through Saturday. Overnight parking will be prohibited. Additionally, up to fifteen parking spaces will be available for Saint Rita's school parking throughout the week on the portion of the lot owned by the church. Finally, prior to constructing the lot, the City must negotiate lease agreements with the two abutting property owners.

Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan (DSUP) # 2002-0037

3. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect?  
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

0 - 70 parkers each day.

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4. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect?  
Specify time period (i.e. day, hour, or shift).

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5. Describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:

Day	Hours	Day	Hours
Mon - Sat	8am - 2am		
Sunday	8am - 2am		

6. Describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use:

A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.

N/A

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B. How will the noise from patrons be controlled?

N/A

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7. Describe any potential odors emanating from the proposed use and plans to control them:

N/A

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Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan (DSUP) # 2002-0037

8. Provide information regarding trash and litter generated by the use:

A. What type of trash and garbage will be generated by the use?

Paper, cans  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. How much trash and garbage will be generated by the use?

One to two trash receptacles weekly  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. How often will trash be collected?

Weekly  
\_\_\_\_\_

D. How will you prevent littering on the property, streets and nearby properties?

Install two trash receptacles.  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

Yes.      No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

Yes.      No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of residents, employees and patrons?

N/A

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**ALCOHOL SALES**

12. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?

Yes.      No.

If yes, describe alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales. Existing uses must describe their existing alcohol sales and/or service and identify any proposed changes in that aspect of the operation.

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**PARKING AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS**

13. Provide information regarding the availability of off-street parking:

A. How many parking spaces are required for the proposed use pursuant to section 8-200 (A) of the zoning ordinance?

70 spaces

B. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:

68            Standard spaces  
                      Compact spaces  
2                Handicapped accessible spaces.  
                      Other.

Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan (DSUP) # 2002-0037

- C. Where is required parking located? (check one)       on-site     off-site.

If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located:

\_\_\_\_\_

Pursuant to section 8-200 (C) of the zoning ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.

- D. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the zoning ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

14. Provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

- A. How many loading spaces are required for the use, per section 8-200 (B) of the zoning ordinance?      N/A

- B. How many loading spaces are available for the use?      N/A

- C. Where are off-street loading facilities located?      N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- D. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

- E. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?

Yes

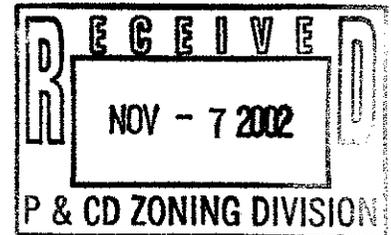
\_\_\_\_\_

**KMZ Rosenman**  
KATTEN MUCHIN ZAVIS ROSENMAN

1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.  
East Lobby, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20007-5201  
202.625.3500 office 202.298.7570 fax

CHRISTOPHER J. HART  
christopher.hart@kmzr.com  
202.625.3601 direct fax

November 6, 2002



By Federal Express and Facsimile

City of Alexandria  
Planning Commission  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Eilene P. Fogarty, Director  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
City of Alexandria  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Docket Item No. 14 for Planning Commission Meeting on 11/7/02; Development Special Use Permit No. 2002-0037; City Parking Lot (Datatel Site)

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am a parishioner at St. Rita's Church in Alexandria and have been asked by the pastor, Father Denis Donahue, to respond to the 17-page packet of information we have just received from you regarding the referenced SUP application. In general, as I think you know, we have been very supportive of the City's efforts in removing the Datatel building as a neighborhood eyesore, and we are also supportive of the City's efforts to develop a surface parking lot on that former site. However, there were several points noted in the application package that were of concern to us and since, due to the short notice and scheduling conflicts, we are unable to attend the Planning Commission meeting in person, we thought it best to memorialize these concerns in writing for you and for City staff. To hopefully assist you in this process, we also attach a copy of your SUP application package, with which we have marked and annotated with our concerns and comments. Those concerns are as follows:

1. It seems to us that the number of spaces reserved for St. Rita's use should not be 14, but should instead be the full 18 spaces that St. Rita's would lose via a lease of that parcel of land which abuts Mt. Vernon Avenue, is directly north of the former Datatel site and is described on your map as 3704 Mt. Vernon Avenue (the "St. Rita's Parking Parcel"). These reserved spaces should be available, free of charge, for use by St. Rita's church and school personnel and by persons attending school and parish functions. The reserved spaces should be available at 7:00 am each day, even if the balance of the lot is not available until 9:00 am. Parkers who disregard the reserved space designation should be aggressively policed and ticketed by the City.

City of Alexandria  
November 6, 2002  
Page 2

2. St. Rita's is generally amenable to the idea of leasing to the City the St. Rita's Parking Parcel. The Diocese has indicated that it will generally defer to St. Rita's on lease-related issues. City counsel should contact me to discuss a basic outline of the proposed lease terms (rental, length of term, etc.). We would need to confirm, via the lease or other building document, that St. Rita's would get full credit for all 18 reserved parking spaces in connection with any subsequent determination of whether the entirety of the St. Rita's property meets City parking and other legal requirements.
3. We are concerned about access and circulation. Obviously, via a lease of the St. Rita's Parking Parcel, we would lose our direct access to Mt. Vernon Avenue, which is at times heavily used by our parish, particularly after Saturday evening and Sunday church services. We would like to discuss this forfeited access further with the City and your transportation professionals, particularly if other viable alternatives may exist. For instance, if the public alleyway was made one way, running from Russell Road to Mt. Vernon Avenue, and was improved to provide more effective vehicle use, the alley alone might provide effective egress to Mt. Vernon Avenue from St. Rita's property, and might also restrict cars from exiting the Datatel parking lot and using the alley to access and cut through St. Rita's property to Russell Road. This cut through traffic between Russell and Mt. Vernon is a major problem which we currently have, and is a significant concern which we have regarding the proposed new City parking lot.
4. The SUP application notes that a shrub hedge would wrap the entire lot. It is important that this hedge be of sufficient height (likely a minimum of eight feet) in order to effectively screen the parking area from the St. Rita's property, which is substantially above the grade of the parking lot. There should, of course, be a pedestrian path through the shrubbery so that people in the parking lot can easily walk to the church and school property. (As an aside, on a related landscaping matter, we are anxious to see the type of landscaped screening that will be used for the rear loading dock of the former Safeway building. We have seen a number of parking lot and other improvements to that site, but have not yet seen any of the landscaping which, as you know, was a requirement of that special use permit.)

I hope the above is helpful in leading the Planning Commission to thoughtful consideration of this issue. As you know, St. Rita's has been an anchor in this neighborhood for more than seventy-five years and we look forward to continue being an anchor and a good neighbor to the

City of Alexandria  
November 6, 2002  
Page 3

City and its residents and businesses well into the future. If you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter or its attachment, please do not hesitate to contact me at the phone number set forth above.

Very truly yours,



Christopher J. Hart

CJH:pjr

Attachment

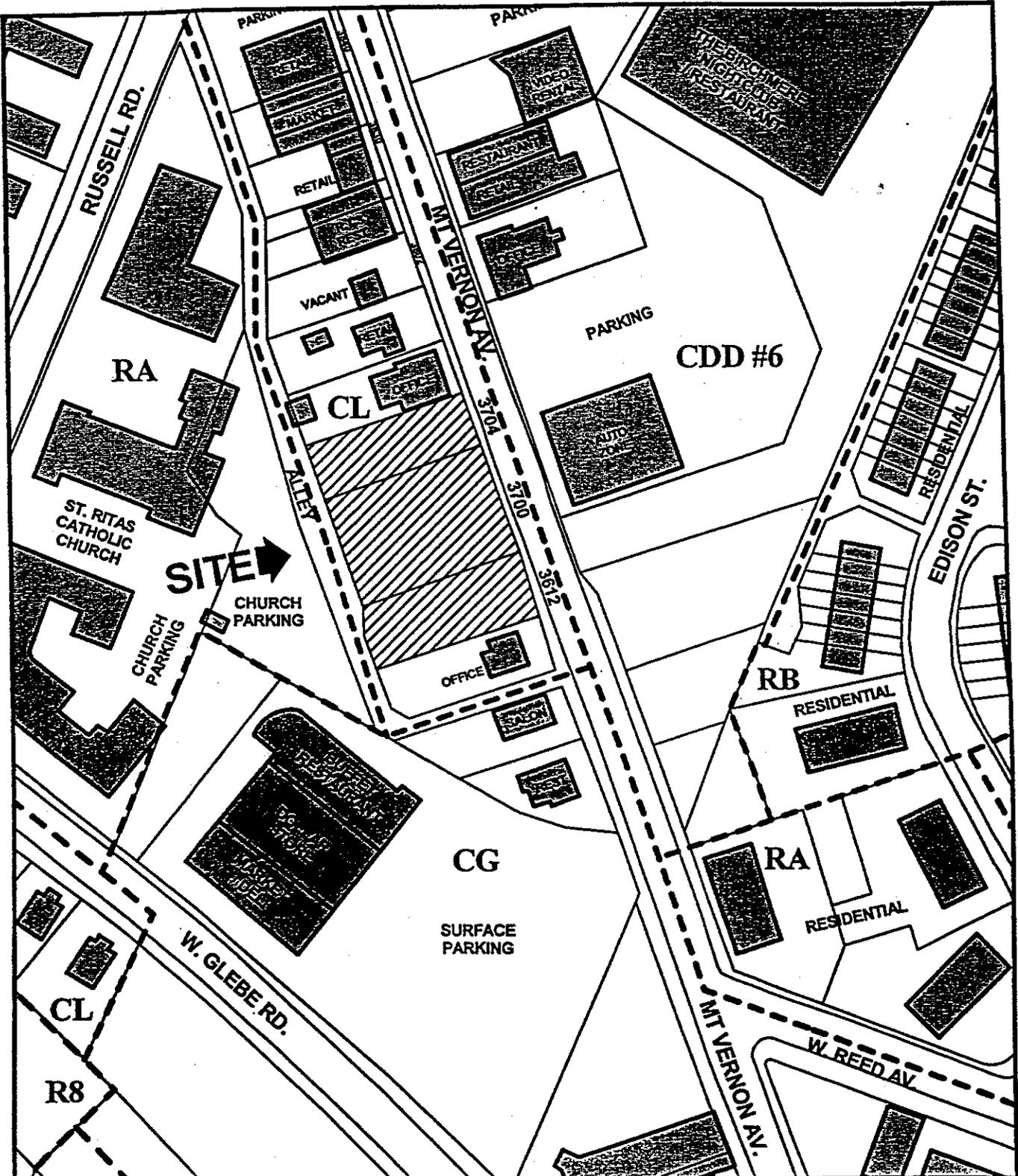
cc: Father Denis Donahue (w/Attachment)  
Barbara Ross, Deputy Director, Dept. of Planning and Zoning (via email)

*St. Rita's  
Comments/Concerns  
11/6/02  
(pages 1-7)*

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DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2002-0037  
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November 7, 2002

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Department of Transportation & Environmental Services  
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Department of General Services,  
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(Previous Datatel Building site)
- ZONE:** CL/Commercial Low
-



**DSUP #2002-0037**

**11/07/02**



STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. No more than 14 spaces shall be reserved for use by St. Rita's church. Those spaces shall be marked as reserved with pavement markings (P&Z) and aggressively policed by the City. *free of charge, and school community*
2. Provide all pedestrian and traffic signage to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services and Planning and Zoning. (T&ES)
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6. In final engineering design full capture of the water quality volume must be achieved, or a waiver shall be approved for this site. (T&ES)
7. Provide a drainage map for the area flowing to the chosen Best Management Practices (BMP) facility, including topographic information and storm drains. (T&ES)
8. The stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) required for this project shall be constructed and installed under the direct supervision of the design engineer or designated representative. The design engineer shall make a written certification to the City that the BMP(s) are constructed and installed as designed and in accordance with the approved Final Site Plan. (T&ES)

DSUP #2002-0037  
CITY PARKING LOT (previous Datatel Bldg site)

9. For any surface-installed BMPs, i.e., Bio-Retention Filters, Vegetated Swales, etc., employed on-site, descriptive signage for the BMP is required to be installed to the satisfaction of the Director T&ES. (T&ES)
10. The stormwater collection system is part of the Four Mile Run watershed. All stormwater inlets shall be duly marked to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES. (T&ES)
11. Plan must demonstrate to the satisfaction of director of T&ES that adequate stormwater outfall is available to the site or else developer is to design and build any on or off site improvements to discharge to an adequate outfall. (T&ES)
12. All Traffic Control Device design plans, Work Zone Traffic Control plans, and Traffic Studies shall be sealed by a professional engineer registered in the State of Virginia. (T&ES)
13. All driveway entrances and sidewalks in public right-of-way or abutting public right-of-way shall meet City standards. (T&ES)
14. Replace existing curb and gutter, sidewalks, and handicap ramps that are in disrepair or broken. (T&ES)
15. Prior to the release of the final site plan, provide a Traffic Control Plan for construction detailing proposed controls to traffic movement, lane closures, construction entrances, haul routes, and storage and staging. (T&ES)
16. A "Certified Land Disturber" must be named on the Erosion and Sediment Control sheets prior to release of the final site plan in accordance with Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Guidelines. (T&ES)

## BACKGROUND

### Description of the Proposal

The applicant, City of Alexandria, is requesting a development special use permit with site plan to construct a 71 space parking lot on the former Datatel building site and on two adjacent privately-owned lots. A special use permit is required for the proposed lot in the CL zone.

The three lots front on Mount Vernon Avenue and have rear access to a public alley which connects Mount Vernon Avenue to Russell Road. *and access to* *and School*

The 15,000 sq. ft. city lot is located between the two privately owned lots. The lot north of the city-owned parcel, an existing parking lot owned by Thomas J. Welsh, Bishop of Arlington, contains 7,500 sq.ft., and is utilized for parking by St. Rita's Church, which abuts the property across the alley to the rear. The parcel to the south is owned by the 3600 Mount Vernon Avenue LLC, contains 7,500 sq.ft. and is vacant. Each of the adjoining owners have allowed the City to lease their parcels for the parking lot use. *Paul Loverde, current*

### Project History

The proposal for the parking lot grew out of the Upper Potomac West/Arlandria planning effort undertaken by the City over the last several years. During the planning process, the vacant and boarded Datatel building was identified as having a strong, negative impact on upper Mount Vernon Avenue, and specifically on investment interest in the area. In addition, insufficient public parking for patrons of businesses was cited as a major factor negatively affecting economic development in the area. The long term redevelopment concept included in the Upper Potomac West Task Force Plan for the area identifies the Datatel site as a good location for a public parking structure, serving existing and future retail uses in the area. The parking structure can be designed to be faced with retail uses and to be part of a larger mixed use project developed on the Safeway/Datatel parcels. *Church also needs parking; hopefully, we are viewed as a strong "anchor" for the neighborhood* *Terms H/d*

Because a large mixed use redevelopment project is unlikely to occur for several years, the City sought to realize its goals for the area, at least partially, in the interim. Specifically, by demolishing the Datatel building, the negative impact of the massive, unfriendly Datatel structure is removed; by using the land as a surface parking lot, the need for parking is addressed. The purchase of the land also involves the City directly in the eventual redevelopment program for the area. *Datatel building*

The issue was discussed by City Council at several junctures over the last year, and the purchase of the property approved by resolution on June 25, 2002. The City purchased the building on August 19, 2002, and thereafter arranged for its demolition. This application then is the next step in the process by which the land is developed for an interim parking lot.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The proposal utilizes the total 30,000 sq.ft. of land area to accommodate a single parking lot with 71 spaces. The parking lot will be built and controlled by the City of Alexandria and will be maintained by a private contractor.

*must be tall on back edge*  
The proposed lot will bring substantial streetscape improvements along the frontage of Mount Vernon Avenue. Currently, there are three curbcuts along the frontage of these properties; these three curbcuts are replaced with a single curbcut under the plan. The existing 4' sidewalk along the frontage will be widened to 10', including 4' deep tree wells for six new street trees. A substantial landscape strip, 18' in depth, separates the pavement of the parking lot from the sidewalk, and a shrub hedge wraps around the entire parking lot, helping to screen the lot from the street, the alley and adjoining properties. Additional trees are planted along the north and south property boundaries and in landscape medians located within the parking lot. The proposed tree canopy on the site of 13,750 square feet will far exceed the 7,500 square feet required.

Circulation

*Very concerned about how to avoid cut-through traffic from mt. Vernon or parking lot to Russell Rd*

Access to the lot from Mount Vernon Avenue will be via a single curb cut and driveway entrance that will be located opposite the curb cut for the Birchmere. This position was selected because it will provide the safest condition for drivers simultaneously exiting the two lots. One access point will also be provided at the rear of the proposed lot into the adjoining alley.

Parking Lot Operation

Parking times and restrictions on the lot will be similar to those in force for the on-street parking along Mount Vernon Avenue, with the exception that overnight parking in the lot will not be permitted. The restrictions will permit two hour parking between 9 am and midnight, Monday through Friday, with no time restriction between 6 am and Midnight on Saturday and Sunday. These restrictions will be communicated by signs placed within the parking lot. The restrictions in the lot are intended to mirror the controls that now existing on Mount Vernon Avenue near the lot.

*7 am for St. Rita's reserved spaces*

*18* Fourteen of the parking spaces at the northern end of the lot will be reserved for use by St Rita's school personnel and parish and persons attending school + parish functions. These 14 spaces replace the 14 spaces on the existing St. Rita's lot, which are being absorbed into the larger parking lot. In addition, it is anticipated that church patrons will be able to use the lot on Sundays.

*ends at midnight or ends at 2 am?*

*18*

Lighting

The parking lot will be lit with fixtures on 15' tall poles. The lighting will allow for safe use in the evenings and will provide that added benefit of distributing light generally in an area which is currently felt by many to be uncomfortably dark.

Conclusion

*Church will likely need surface parking well into the future*

The proposed parking lot, combining private and public land, and for use by the community, the church and area business customers, provides a positive interim use of the site. While over the long term surface parking is not appropriate along Mount Vernon Avenue, visually, this interim lot will improve the streetscape along this stretch of Mount Vernon Avenue by bringing sidewalk and significant landscape improvements. Staff recommends approval.

STAFF: Eileen P. Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;  
Barbara Ross, Deputy Director  
Kimberley Johnson, Chief, Development;  
Rob McLeod, Urban Planner.

OB  
CLEOP

15  
DATATEL SITE - CITY PARKING LOT

APPLICATION for  
DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL USE PERMIT with SITE PLAN  
DSUP # 2002-0037

PROJECT NAME: 3700 Mount Vernon Avenue Parking Lot (Formerly Datatel)

PROPERTY LOCATION: 3612 - 3704 Mount Vernon Avenue

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 007.00-08-11<sup>10+</sup>, 007.00-08-03<sup>15.01-4-</sup> ZONE: CL

APPLICANT Name: City of Alexandria

Address: 301 King Street, Alexandria VA 22314

PROPERTY OWNER Name: See attached Property Owner List

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL: The City of Alexandria proposes construction

of a 70 space public parking lot on the former Datatel site and abutting  
properties at 3612 and 3704 Mt. Vernon Avenue.

MODIFICATIONS REQUESTED: Site modifications include grading, site, con-  
struction of asphalt parking lot, planting of trees and landscape buffer,  
installation of parking lot lighting.

SUP's REQUESTED: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE UNDERSIGNED** hereby applies for Development Site Plan, with Special Use Permit, approval in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

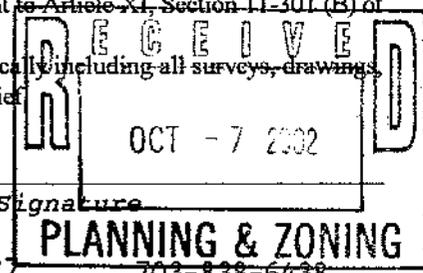
**THE UNDERSIGNED**, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-301 (B) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

**THE UNDERSIGNED** also attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required of the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of his knowledge and belief.

Emily Baker, City Engineer  
Print Name of Applicant or Agent

301 King Street, Box 67  
Mailing/Street Address

Alexandria, VA 22314  
City and State Zip Code



\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
703-838-4327 703-838-6438  
Telephone # Fax #

October 7, 2002  
Date

===== DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - OFFICE USE ONLY =====

Application Received: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fee Paid & Date: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Received Plans for Completeness: \_\_\_\_\_  
Received Plans for Preliminary: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION - PLANNING COMMISSION: 11/07/02 RECOMMEND APPROVAL 7-0

ACTION - CITY COUNCIL: 11/16/02PH--CC approved the Planning Commission  
recommendation.