

Docket Item #5
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2004-0018

Planning Commission Meeting
May 4, 2004

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for a special use permit to rent automobiles, light trucks and passenger vans.

APPLICANT: The Hertz Corporation
by Ronald L. Moore

LOCATION: 501 South Pickett Street

ZONE: CG/Commercial General

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the permit conditions found in Section III of this report.

I. DISCUSSION

REQUEST

The applicant, The Hertz Corporation, represented by Ronald L. Moore, requests special use permit approval for the operation of an automobile rental business located at 501 South Pickett Street.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is one lot of record located on the northwest corner of Edsall Road and South Pickett Street with 220 feet of frontage along South Pickett Street, and a total lot area of approximately 9,975 square feet. The site is developed with a two story brick building of 3,000 square feet, one parking lot with 17 spaces and a second parking area with an additional three spaces. Each parking area is accessed through one curb cut on South Pickett Street. The applicant proposes to occupy the second floor with an office area of 3,000 square feet.

The subject property is surrounded by commercial and industrial uses, including a fast food restaurant, Burger Delite, to the north, self storage to the south, and automobile service uses and dealerships to the east.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant requests special use permit approval to operate an automobile rental business on the northwest corner of Edsall Road and South Pickett Street. It will cater primarily to people who need vehicles to use while their cars are being repaired or serviced. The typical rental duration is between ten and 14 days. The applicant will have ten on-site parking spaces available for its exclusive use, three of these ten spaces may be occupied by rental cars. The remaining on-site parking spaces are reserved for the building's first floor, however, the applicant's lease provides for an additional parking area for the storage of up to 12 rental vehicles on the 'Mayflower' property, which adjoins the subject site to the south. On either site, there will be no deliveries, and no loading or unloading of cars. The rental cars are driven to the site one by one. The applicant will not wash, fuel or perform maintenance on any vehicles at this location. These services will be performed at existing commercial facilities, including the Shell Station located 5740 South Van Dorn Street, and Mr. Wash located at 450 Edsall Road.

Hours of operation: The proposed business will be open from 6:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. Monday through Friday, and from 7:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. on Saturday. The business will be closed on Sunday.

Employees/patrons: The business will be operated by three employees per shift with two shifts each day. The applicant anticipates between 15 and 20 customers per day.

Trash: The trash will be collected weekly and the business' management will monitor littering on a daily basis.

PARKING

Pursuant to Section 8-200 A(18) of the Zoning Ordinance, the applicant is required to provide one parking space per each 475 square feet of office floor area. Applied to this case, the applicant is required to provide seven spaces. A total of 20 parking spaces are provided on-site, 10 of which are allocated for the applicant's use. Consequently, the applicant can park up to three Hertz rental cars on-site, leaving seven required parking spaces available to patrons and employees at all times. Staff notes that the applicant is proposing to park additional rental vehicles on an accessory private parking lot within 500 feet, as permitted by the Zoning Ordinance. Up to 12 parking spaces on the 'Mayflower' property directly south of subject site are designated for the applicant's exclusive use. The rental cars will be moved between the sites by Hertz employees.

ZONING / MASTER PLAN

The subject property is located in the CG/Commercial General zone. Section 4-400 of the Zoning Ordinance allows an automobile rental business in the CG zone only with a special use permit. The proposed use is consistent with the Landmark/Van Dorn chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for commercial use.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff has no objection to the proposed automobile rental business located at 501 South Pickett Street. The proposed use is compatible with the intent of the Master Plan for this area, which is to preserve locations for light industrial and service commercial activities within the area.

As in other special use permit cases throughout the City, staff is recommending landscape and site improvements in order to provide screening of the asphalt and concrete parking areas, and to make the site more attractive and pedestrian friendly. In this case, a fair amount of landscaping is already existing, however, parts of the evergreen hedge are in poor condition and portions of the planting beds are bare. In addition, the driveway apron and adjoining landscape bed on the southwest side of the property are in disrepair. The applicant submitted a landscape and site improvement plan (see attached images) that includes (1) the planting of a Manhattan Euonymus hedge along the main parking lot, (2) the installment of a landscape area on the south side of the property to contain a Manhattan Euonymus hedge, (3) the planting of two Kwanzan Cherry trees, and (4) the repair of the driveway apron and maintenance of the landscape band along South Pickett Street.

Staff has also included all standard conditions relating to automobile rental establishments, and a condition requiring a review of the proposed automobile rental business after it has been operational for one year to ensure that the site improvements are implemented. If there are any problems with its operation, additional conditions may be imposed. In addition, staff recommends that the permit be reviewed five years after approval by the City Council so that any emerging redevelopment opportunities may be considered at that time. With these conditions, staff recommends approval of this special use permit.

III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

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

1. The special use permit shall be granted to the applicant only or to any business or entity in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z)
2. Rental cars on the property and on the accessory parking lot shall be stored in a neat and orderly fashion at all times, with a hanging tag on the rear view mirror or other means of identifying rental vehicles. No stacking of parked rental cars is permitted. (P&Z)
3. A minimum of ten on-site parking spaces shall be provided. The number of rental cars parked on-site shall be limited to three. Up to 12 rental vehicles are permitted to be parked on an accessory parking lot within 500 feet. A site plan of the additional parking lot shall be reviewed by the Department of Planning and Zoning prior to its operation. (P&Z)
4. No junked, abandoned, or stripped vehicles shall be parked or stored outside at any time. (P&Z)
5. No rental cars shall be displayed, parked, or stored on the public rights-of-way. (P&Z)
6. No automobile repair shall be done on the premises or on the accessory parking lot at any time. (P&Z)
7. Car washing shall be performed at an existing commercial facility. (P&Z)
8. No banners, streamers, flags, or similar advertising devices shall be displayed on the premises or on the accessory parking lot, but signs advertising the general business conducted on the premises may be displayed in accordance with Article IX, Section 9-100 of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia. (P&Z)
9. No vehicle parts, tires, or other materials shall be stored or permitted to accumulate outside except in a dumpster or other suitable trash receptacle or enclosure. (P&Z)

10. The hours of operation shall be limited to between 6:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Monday through Friday, and to between 7:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. on Saturday, as requested by the applicant. (P&Z)
11. The applicant shall provide parking lot lighting to City standards. Lighting shall be shielded to prevent glare and excess spillover lighting in accordance with City Code. (P&Z)
12. No loading or unloading of vehicles is permitted either on the site or on the public right-of-way. (P&Z)
13. Loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building and no amplified noise shall be audible at the property line. (T&ES)
14. All waste products, including but not limited to organic compounds (solvents), motor oils, compressor lubricant and antifreeze shall be disposed of in accordance with all local, state and federal ordinances or regulations and shall not be discharged into the sanitary or storm sewers, or be discharged onto the ground. (P&Z)
15. The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria Best Management Practices Manual for Automotive Related Industries. A copy can be obtained by contacting the Division of Environmental Quality at 703/519-3400, extension 166. (P&Z)
16. Within six months of approval, the applicant shall submit and implement a landscape and site improvement plan generally consistent with the attached plan and to the satisfaction of the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning. (P&Z)
17. All shrubbery is to have a maximum height of 36 inches when fully mature and trees shall be limbed up a minimum of 6 feet as to allow for the optimum amount of natural surveillance. (Police)
18. The applicant is to contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a security survey for the business and a robbery awareness program for all employees. (Police)
19. The applicant shall conduct employee training sessions on an ongoing basis, including as part of any employee orientation, to discuss all SUP provisions and requirements. (P&Z)

20. The applicant shall encourage its employees to use mass transit or to carpool when traveling to and from work, by posting information regarding DASH and METRO routes, the location where fare passes for transit are sold, and advertising of carpooling opportunities. (P&Z)
21. The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the special use permit at two points in the future: (1) after the business has been operational for one year and (2) in five years after approval of the SUP. At either point, the Director shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) the director received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as the result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation of the permit conditions, (c) the director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed. (P&Z)

STAFF: Eileen Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;
Barbara Ross, Deputy Director;
Bettina Irps, Urban Planner.

Staff Note: In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Transportation & Environmental Services:

- F-1 The application indicates that no car washing, fueling or maintenance operations shall occur at this location. Any modification to operations at this facility may require an amendment to the Special Use Permit..
- R-1 All loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building and no amplified noise shall be audible at the property line.
- C-1 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:

- F-1 The current use group is B-Business. The proposed use without interior vehicle storage is compatible with the existing use. If the applicant intends to store vehicles inside at anytime, the structure shall undergo a change of use from B to S-2, low hazard storage. The parking of vehicles inside the structure shall be prohibited at any time unless a change of use as described above is approved and a new certificate of occupancy is issued under the new use group.
- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Vehicle repairs of any type are prohibited within the interior of the structure under the current use.
- C-4 No vehicle repairs or servicing shall be permitted on the exterior of the structure at any time

Health Department:

- F-1 No Comments

Police Department:

- R-1 The applicant is to contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a security survey for the business.
- R-2 The applicant is to contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a robbery awareness program for all employees.
- R-3 The lighting level is to be a minimum of 2.0 foot candles minimum maintained for the parking lot.
- R-4 All shrubbery is to have a maximum height of 36 inches when fully mature.
- R-5 Trees are to be limbed up a minimum of 6 feet as to allow for the optimum amount of natural surveillance.