

Docket Item #12  
SUBDIVISION #2005-0008

Planning Commission Meeting  
October 4, 2005

**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request to subdivide the subject property into two lots.

**APPLICANT:** Loni Czekalski

**LOCATION:** 30 Sunset Drive

**ZONE:** RA/Multifamily zone

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff would prefer a deferral to allow the applicant to find a more appropriate solution to parking and access on the two new lots. The applicant has refused a deferral. Therefore, staff has included a number of conditions to address negative impacts from the proposed parking and access layout for the lots.

**I. DISCUSSION:**

REQUEST

The applicant, Loni Czekalski, requests approval for a subdivision of one lot at 30 Sunset Drive, into two lots.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is one lot of record with 70 feet of frontage on Sunset Drive and a total lot area of 5,563 square feet. The property is occupied by a one-story single-family residence, with no driveway or parking.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing to subdivide the existing lot into two lots. The owner intends to construct a new semi-detached structure on the properties, with associated off-street parking. At staff's request, the applicant provided a conceptual plan of the proposed development which includes the building area, area of disturbance, and curb cut and on-site parking. Staff requested proposed elevations, however, the applicant chose not to invest in architectural drawings prior to the approval of the subdivision.

PARKING AND ACCESS

Section 8-200(A)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance requires two parking spaces for a two-family dwelling, which would be two spaces for each proposed dwelling on the two new lots. Section 8-200(C)(5)(d) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that within the Rosemont Historic District, access to all parking shall be from an alley or interior court, except that upon finding by the Director of Planning and Zoning that such access is clearly not feasible, an application for a curb cut to provide access may be filed with the Directors of Planning and Zoning and Transportation and Environmental Services.

In this case, the subject property is located in the Rosemont Historic District, and access to the property from an alley or interior court is not feasible. At staff's request, the applicant provided a conceptual parking and curb cut scheme as part of the subdivision application (shown here as Plan A). The Director of Transportation and Environmental Services did not support separate driveways for each property as depicted on the plan because the location and configuration of the two driveways on the inside portion of a curve located in close proximity to the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue has poor sight distance which results in a hazardous condition for vehicles backing out onto the street. Staff found that the location and nature of the proposed curb cut and associated parking did not conform with the character and architectural style of the developed blockface, many of which

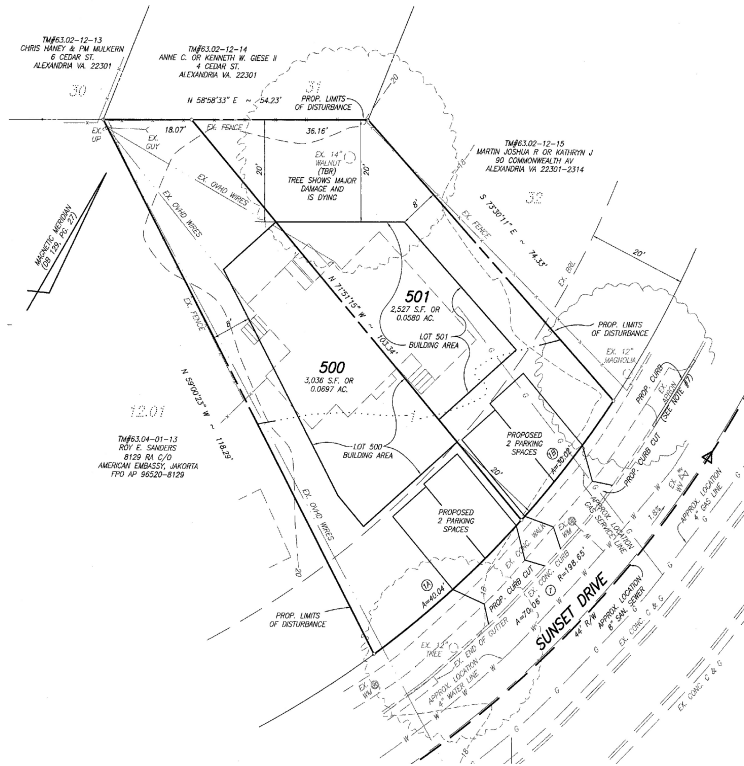


SUB #2005-0008  
30 Sunset Drive

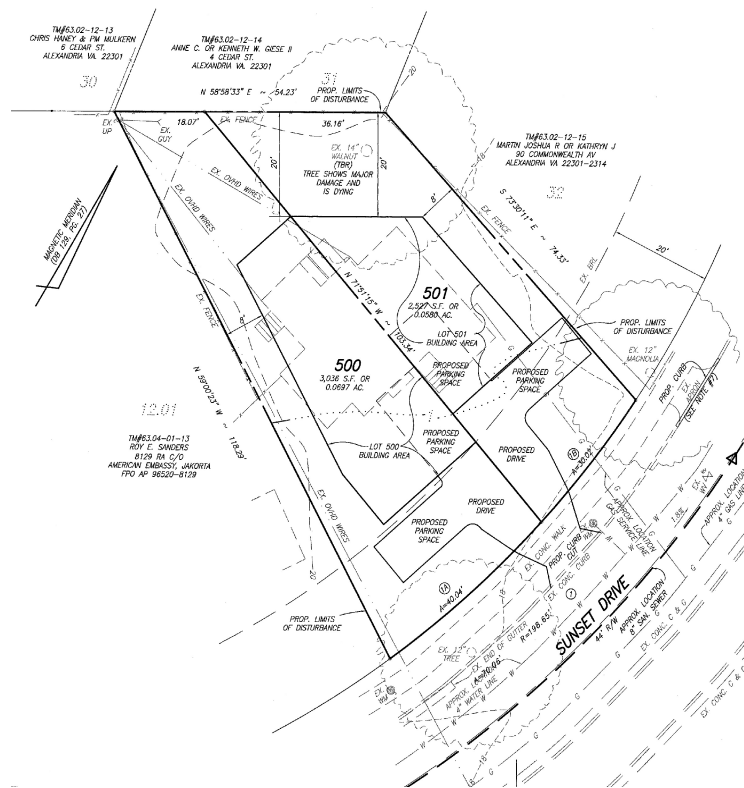
contain a single drive with tandem parking. Staff met with the applicant to discuss its concerns.

The applicant provided a subsequent scheme (pictured here as Plan B). The proposal includes a single 16-foot wide curb cut for both properties, and front loaded garages and surface parking in the front yard, resulting in a great deal of paving in the front yards of the proposed semi-detached dwellings. It is not clear how vehicles can turn around on-site to avoid backing on to Sunset Drive, a concern raised by T&ES for Plan A. The plan was not provided to staff until the end of the business day on September 23, 2005, the same day staff reports were to be forwarded to the Planning Commission. As a result, other departments have not had an opportunity to review the plan prior to release of this report.

Staff has asked the applicant to work together to find a solution to the parking and access issue that would result in less paving and parking in the front yard. The applicant has not agreed to look at other alternatives. Their position is that this is a subdivision and they have minimally met the required parking in the proposed plan.



Plan A



Plan B

COMPLIANCE WITH RA ZONE REGULATIONS

The proposed lots will be 3,036 and 2,527 square feet in area, exceeding the minimum lot area of 1,980 square feet. The houses will be limited to a floor area ratio of 0.75 (resulting in maximum floor areas of 2,277 square feet for Lot 500 and 1,895 square feet for Lot 501). The proposed subdivision, and conceptual development plan, comply with the RA zoning requirements as follows:

<b>RA MINIMUM LOT STANDARDS</b>			
	<b><u>Required</u></b>	<b><u>Lot 500</u></b>	<b><u>Lot 501</u></b>
<b><u>Lot Size</u></b>	<u>1,980 square feet</u>	<u>3,036 square feet</u>	<u>2,527 square feet</u>
<b><u>Lot Width/Frontage</u></b>	<u>25 feet</u>	<u>40 feet</u>	<u>30 feet</u>
<b><u>Front Yard</u></b>	<u>20 feet</u>	<u>20 feet</u>	<u>21.5 feet</u>
<b><u>Side Yard</u></b>	<u>1:3; minimum 7 feet</u>	<u>8 feet</u>	<u>8 feet</u>
<b><u>Rear Yard</u></b>	<u>1:1; minimum 8 feet</u>	<u>27 feet</u>	<u>20 feet</u>

\*Note: The zoning analysis is based on Plan A. Plan B is essentially the same, except that the front yard of Lot 501 is deeper.

The proposed subdivision, and schematic development plan, complies with the RA zone regulations regarding lot requirements and bulk and open space regulations. It is unclear how required parking will be accommodated on site.

VARIANCE

Section 7-1005 of the Zoning Ordinance requires that no more than 50 percent of any required yard be used for parking of automobiles, including driveways whether paved or unpaved. The schematic parking plan (Plan A) depicts Lot 501 as having more than 50% of the front yard occupied by parking. Under the applicant’s original scenario, a variance would be required. Plan B would not require a variance for front yard parking.

SUBDIVISION STANDARDS

Section 11-1710(B) of the Zoning Ordinance requires a subdivision to meet the following standard:

No lot shall be resubdivided in such a manner as to detract from the value of the adjacent property. Lots covered by a resubdivision shall be of substantially the same character as to suitability for residential use, areas, street frontage, alignment to streets and restrictions as other land within the subdivision, particularly with respect to similarly situated lots within the adjoining portions of the original subdivision.

CHARACTER OF NEIGHBORHOOD

The subject property is located in the Rosemont Historic District. The District includes homes built in the era between 1908 until World War II, and ranges stylistically from the Arts and Crafts and Craftsmen styles to Colonial Revival. Contributing dwellings include detached, semi-detached, townhouse, and garden apartment buildings. Brick is the dominant building material, although stucco and face-brick finishes over brick, wood frame, or hollow tile are common. Houses are mostly one and two stories in height, with or without half-story attics. No houses of the contributing period are taller than 2-2.5 stories. Sunset Drive is a mix of buildings, including detached, semi-detached, and garden apartments. The four contributing semi-detached structures on Sunset are two stories, made of brick, have front porches, and are of either Vernacular or Colonial Revival style.

MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The proposed use is consistent with the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for medium density residential use.

**II. STAFF ANALYSIS:**

Staff is concerned about the proposed curb cuts and parking configuration as depicted on the applicant's schematic development scenario. The proposed curb cuts and parking plan was found to be unsafe by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. As indicated previously, a revised parking and access plan was just recently received. The revised plan results in a large curbcut and extensive paving and parking in the front yard.

Staff is also concerned about the design of the proposed dwellings on the site, given their potential impact on adjacent properties. Staff is sensitive to the applicant's decision not to invest in architectural drawings prior to approval of the subdivision. However, staff finds that the general design of any proposed dwellings is critical in determining the suitability of the property for residential use in character with other lots in the area.

In order to provide the opportunity to find a more appropriate solution to the parking and access issue, including how vehicles will be able to exit the site without having to back out onto Sunset Drive (a primary concern of T&ES), staff would recommend deferral. It should be noted, however, that the applicant has not agreed to waive notice beyond the date of this hearing, and as such, in accordance with Section 11-1708 of the Zoning Ordinance, failure to act by the Planning Commission shall be deemed to constitute approval of the plan. Since the applicant refuses the deferral, staff has included several conditions to mitigate some of the potential negative impacts of the proposal, in the event that the Planning Commission approves the request.

**III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

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

1. The final subdivision plat shall comply with the requirements of Section 11-1700 of the Zoning Ordinance. (P&Z)
2. A PLOT PLAN showing all improvements and alterations to the site must be approved by T&ES prior to issuance of a building permit. The applicant is advised that the following is required for the plot plan approval:
  - a. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity.
  - b. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design.
  - c. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2500 square feet. The applicant shall post an erosion and sediment control bond prior to release of the plot plan.
  - d. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan.
  - e. City Code Section 8-1-22 requires that roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (T&ES)
3. Any driveway and walk surfaces shall have minimal paving, with the use of permeable materials to the greatest extent feasible, as determined by the Director of Planning and Zoning. (P&Z)
4. In its design of any proposed dwellings on the newly created lots, the applicant shall include elements compatible with the character of the neighborhood, which shall include, but is not limited to, a front porch and a brick facade, to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning. (P&Z)

5. This subdivision is contingent upon the approval of a parking and access arrangement for the Lots 500 and 501 by the Directors of Planning and Zoning and Transportation and Environmental Services, with the goals of maintaining public safety, and minimizing parking in the front yard. The Directors' determination may include that no parking or reduced parking is appropriate, which would require that the applicant apply for a Special Use Permit for a parking reduction. (P&Z) (T&ES)
6. The applicant shall submit an application for any proposed curbcut for approval by the Directors of Planning and Zoning and Transportation and Environmental Services. (P&Z)

STAFF: Eileen Fogarty, Director;  
Richard Josephson, Deputy Director;  
Valerie Peterson, Urban Planner.

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Staff Note: This plat will expire 18 months from the date of approval unless recorded sooner.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Transportation & Environmental Services:

- F-1 T&ES does not support separate driveways for each of the properties as illustrated on the plan because the location and configuration of two driveways on the inside portion of a curve located in close proximity to the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue has poor sight distance which results in a hazardous condition for vehicles backing out onto the street.
- R-1 This subdivision is contingent upon the approval of a parking and access arrangement for the Lots 500 and 501 by the Directors of Planning and Zoning and Transportation and Environmental Services, with the goals of maintaining public safety, and minimizing parking in the front yard. The Directors' determination may include that no parking or reduced parking is appropriate, which would require that the applicant apply for a Special Use Permit for a parking reduction.
- R-2 A PLOT PLAN showing all improvements and alterations to the site must be approved by T&ES prior to issuance of a building permit. The applicant is advised that the following is required for the plot plan approval:
- a. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity.
  - b. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design.
  - c. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2500 square feet. The applicant shall post an erosion and sediment control bond prior to release of the plot plan.
  - d. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan.
  - e. City Code Section 8-1-22 requires that roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (T&ES)
- C-1 All utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3)



- C-2 Pay sanitary sewer tap fee prior to issuance of a building permit (or with release of the approved plot plan). (Sec. 5-6-25.1)
- C-3 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61)
- C-4 Roof drains and sub-surface drains shall be connected to the city storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. (Sec. 8-1-22)
- C-5 Per City Ordinance No. 3176, requests for new driveway aprons, unless approved at public hearing as part of a related item, must be accompanied by an adjacent **Property Owners Acknowledgment** form.
- C-6 Change in point of attachment or removal of existing overhead utility services will require undergrounding or a variance. (Sec. 5-3-3)
- C-7 All drainage facilities must be designed to the satisfaction of T&ES. Drainage divide maps and computations must be provided for approval.
- C-8 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.
- C-9 The applicant must comply with the Article XIII of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, which includes requirements for storm water pollutant load reduction, treatment of the water quality volume default, and storm water quantity management.
- C-10 The applicant must comply with the City of Alexandria, Erosion and Sediment Control Code, Section 5, Chapter 4. This includes naming a Responsible Land Disturber on the Erosion and Sediment Control sheets prior to engaging in land disturbing activities in accordance with Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Law.
- C-11 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. This includes the state requirement for a VSMP permit for land disturbing activities greater than 2500 SF.

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 Subdivision of this property shall occur after demolition of the existing property, otherwise, the applicant shall modify the existing structure to comply with the USBC as a result of the new interior lot line.

Police Department:

- F-1 The Police Department has no objections to the subdivision of the land for the purpose of subdividing the property into two regulation conforming lots.

Historic Alexandria Commission (Archaeology):

- F-1 No comments.

Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (Arborist):

- F-1 No comments.