

Docket Item #13
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2006-0063

Planning Commission Meeting
September 7, 2006

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for a special use permit for a parking reduction for a new residential dwelling.

APPLICANT: James A. Merklinger

LOCATION: 630 North Columbus Street

ZONE: RB/ Townhouse

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

SITE GRAPHIC
AVAILABLE IN THE PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICE

I. DISCUSSION

REQUEST

The applicant, James A. Merklinger, requests special use permit approval for a parking reduction for a new townhouse unit located at 630 North Columbus Street.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is one lot of record with 17.6 feet of frontage on North Columbus Street, 87 feet of depth and a total lot area of 1,531.2 square feet. The site is currently undeveloped. Access to the property is from an unnamed rear alley. The site is located in the Parker-Gray Historic District. The surrounding area is occupied by a mix of residential uses as well as a church. Immediately surrounding the property are other residential homes.



The applicant is the owner of the subject property and the owner of the property immediately to the north, a townhouse dwelling at 632 North Columbus Street.

The applicant has been the owner of both properties since March 1, 2000. Properties along this block of North Columbus Street are developed with a variety of residential buildings such as townhouses and semi-detached dwellings.

PROPOSAL

The applicant is requesting a parking reduction of one space for a new townhouse with a footprint of 656.2 square feet. One parking space will be provided at the rear of the property and accessed from the alley. Parking for the unit at 632 North Columbus Street will be lost as it is currently provided on the subject property. The applicant proposes the new townhome to be identical to the residence located next door at 632 N. Columbus Street.

If the SUP is approved, the applicant will be required to obtain variances from the Board of Zoning Appeals, prior to developing the property, for reduced open space, rear setback and paving in a required yard. The applicant is expected to be heard before the Board of Zoning Appeals regarding the request for an open space modification on October 12, 2006. The proposed house is located in the Parker-Gray Historic District. If the SUP is approved, and if the variances are granted, BAR approval is also required for the project to proceed.

PARKING REDUCTION

Section 8-200 of the Zoning Ordinance requires that a single family dwelling provide two parking spaces. The applicant is proposing one parking space, with access from the alley. The applicant is requesting a parking reduction to allow the provision of only one parking space instead of the two

parking spaces required. Section 8-100 of the Zoning Ordinance allows a reduction of required parking only with a Special Use Permit.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject property is located in the RB zone. Section 3-702 (C) of the Zoning Ordinance allows a townhouse dwelling in the RB zone.

The subject property has been zoned RB since 1951 when the zone was adopted. Since then, RB Zoning has been amended several times, to include “grandfather” language designed to recognize properties that no longer complied with the zone after amendments were approved. In addition to allowing multifamily and commercial uses, in limited instances, the language in Section 3-707 (B) of the Zoning Ordinance allows lots of record to be developed even though they may have less than the required lot area. Section 3-707B provides:

“Any land zoned to RB prior to February 27, 1973 may be developed at a minimum lot size of 1,600 square feet per dwelling; provided however that if the lot was recorded prior to December 28, 1951, the lot may be developed with a single family dwelling and accessory structures at the lot size shown on the recorded plat”.

The proposed use is consistent with the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for residential use.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff does not object to the proposed parking reduction. The applicant is proposing to build a townhome that is a duplicate of the adjacent townhome. Staff finds that there is no significant vegetation on the subject property.

The applicant has an open space modification request before the Board of Zoning Appeals because the applicant requests to build on the subject substandard lot. Under the RB zone, a lot must have at least 1,980 square feet and provide at least 800 square feet (40%) of open space. The applicant has indicated that the substandard lot has 1,479 square feet and has proposed to provide 600 square feet (40%) of open space. Therefore, staff does not object to the open space modification. Given that the lot is substandard, the applicant can provide 40% of open space on the subject lot which is the same requirement for a standard RB zone lot.

Presently, there is only one parking space that is provided on the subject lot which is used by the home at 632 North Columbus. Staff has observed, on multiple occasions during peak evening times, that there is sufficient on-street parking within a two-block radius of the residence. Given that there is sufficient on-street parking within a two-block radius, staff has no objection with the request. Staff finds that the parking is consistent with the rest of the neighborhood since the applicant is providing one parking space in addition to a one space parking reduction.

Staff has included a condition that the parking reduction is contingent upon approval by both the Board of Zoning Appeals as well as the Board of Architectural Review. Staff recommends approval of the parking reduction request.

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 corporation in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z)
2. Granting of this special use permit is contingent upon approval by both the Board of Zoning Appeals as well as the Board of Architectural Review. (P&Z)
3. A PLOT PLAN shall be submitted required showing all improvements and alterations to the site which must be approved by T&ES prior to issuance of a building permit. (T&ES)
4. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
5. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be City standard design. (T&ES)
6. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2500 square feet. (T&ES)
7. 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. (T&ES)
8. The applicant should not allow any other metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology. (Archaeology)
9. All archaeological work will be carried out in accordance with the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards and is subject to the approval of the City Archaeologist.* (Archaeology)
10. The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the special use permit after it has been operational for one year, and 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 has 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;
Richard Josephson, Deputy Director;
James Hunt, 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:

- C-1 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. 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. (Sec.8-1-22)
- C-2 All utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3)
- C-3 Pay sanitary sewer tap fee prior to issuance of a building permit. (Sec. 5-6-25.1)
- C-4 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61)
- C-5 Change in point of attachment or removal of existing overhead utility services will require undergrounding or a variance. (Sec. 5-3-3)
- C-6 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.
- R-1 A PLOT PLAN shall be submitted required showing all improvements and alterations to the site which must be approved by T&ES prior to issuance of a building permit.
- R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity.
- R-3 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design.
- R-4 An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2500 square feet.

- R-5 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.

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 No comment.

Health Department:

- F-1 No comment.

Police Department:

- F-1 The Police Department has no objections to the parking space reduction and no objection to the open space modification.

Board of Architectural Review

- F-1 The only structure on the lot at 630 North Columbus Street is a shed. The plans indicate the shed will be removed to allow for the construction of the proposed new single family house. The lot is adjacent to a row of three, two story brick rowhouses (632, 634, & 636 North Columbus Street) that were constructed between 1921 and 1931.
- F-2 630 North Columbus Street is located within the Parker Gray District. The demolition of the shed and the plans for the new single family house must be approved by the Board of Architectural Review.

Archaeology

- F-1 Tax records indicate that a house may have been present in 1810 on the block bounded by Columbus, Pendleton, Alfred, and Wythe Streets, but the exact location is not known. However, the tax records from 1830 and 1850 do not show a structure on the square. During the Civil War, the property was the site of a large, two-story structure containing mess rooms, kitchens, and bunk rooms utilized by the Union Army as part of the Washington Street Corral. After the war, the block was subdivided, and houses were constructed along Columbus Street during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but it does not appear that a structure was built on this property. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into residential life in 19th-century Alexandria and into military activities during the Civil War.

- C-1 To insure that significant information is not lost when development occurs on this property, the applicant must hire an archaeological consultant to complete a Documentary Study and an Archaeological Evaluation. Contact Alexandria Archaeology to obtain a scope of work for this investigation. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant must complete a Resource Management Plan, as outlined in the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards*. Preservation measures presented in the Resource Management Plan, as approved by the City Archaeologist, will be implemented.
- C-2 All archaeological preservation measures must be completed prior to ground-disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance). To confirm, call Alexandria Archaeology at (703) 838-4399.
- C-3 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
- C-4 The statements in C-2 and C-3 above must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements. Additional statements to be included on the Final Site Plan will be determined in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology.
- C-5 Certificates of Occupancy will not be issued for this property until the final archaeological report has been received and approved by the City Archaeologist.
- C-6 If warranted by the City Archaeologist, the developer will erect a historic marker on the property according to specifications provided by Alexandria Archaeology. The marker will highlight the historical and archaeological significance of the property.
- C-7 If warranted by the City Archaeologist, the developer will produce a booklet for the public on the history and archaeology of the property, according to specifications provided by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-1 All archaeological work will be carried out in accordance with the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards* and is subject to the approval of the City Archaeologist.
- R-2 The applicant should not allow any other metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

SUP #2006-0063
630 N. Columbus St

**REPORT ATTACHMENTS
AVAILABLE IN THE PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICE**