

**CONSENT AGENDA ITEM**

If no one asks to speak about this case prior to the hearing, it will be approved without discussion as part of the Consent Agenda.

Docket Item #4  
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2008-0046

Planning Commission Meeting  
September 4, 2008

**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request for re-approval of a special use permit for a parking reduction.

**APPLICANT:** James Merklinger

**LOCATION:** 630 N. Columbus Street

**ZONE:** RB/Residential

---

**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.



**SUP #2008-0046**

**09/04/08**



## I. DISCUSSION

### REQUEST

The applicant, James 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 1,479 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.

### BACKGROUND

On September 16, 2006, City Council granted Special Use Permit #2006-0063 for a parking reduction of one space for a proposed townhouse dwelling. The Special Use Permit expired on March 17, 2008. On October 12, 2006, the Board of Zoning Appeals approved BZA2006-0042, a variance for reduced open space. The variance expired on October 12, 2007. On October 25, 2006, the Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new residential townhouse. The BAR approval expired on October 25, 2007.

### PROPOSAL

The applicant is requesting a re-approval of a previously approved 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. This is not considered required parking for the house at 632 North Columbus as it is located on an adjacent lot. The applicant proposes the new townhouse to be identical to the residence located next door at 632 North Columbus Street.

If the SUP is approved, the applicant will be required to re-obtain variances from the Board of Zoning Appeals, prior to developing the property. The proposed house is located in the Parker-Gray Historic District. If the SUP is approved, and if the variances are granted, a new Certificate of Appropriateness from the Parker-Gray BAR is also required for the project to proceed.

#### PARKING

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.

Staff conducted parking surveys over three days, in the mornings and evenings to determine if there was a shortage of parking in the vicinity of the 600 block of North Columbus. Staff found that there was adequate parking at all times observed.

#### 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 grandfathered 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 subject lot existed prior to 1951 and contains 1,479 square feet of land area, therefore it is a legally buildable lot.

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 supports the proposed parking reduction. The applicant is proposing to build a townhouse that is a duplicate of the adjacent townhouse. Staff finds that there is no significant vegetation on the subject property.

The applicant will require re-approval of the required variances before the Board of Zoning Appeals due to the design of the townhouse the applicant proposes to build on the subject substandard lot. The applicant will also require re-approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Parker-Gray BAR.

Presently, there is only one parking space that is provided on the subject lot which is used by the home at 632 North Columbus. None of the other residences on the west side of North Columbus Street provide off-street parking. Staff has observed, on multiple occasions during peak morning and 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 to 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.

With the following conditions staff recommends approval.

## 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. A GRADING 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)
3. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
4. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be City standard design. (T&ES)
5. 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)
6. 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)

7. The applicant should not allow any other metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology. (Archaeology)
8. 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)

STAFF: Richard Josephson, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;  
Richard Bray, 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 T&ES has no objections to the proposed parking reduction. P&Z parking survey indicates that there is ample on-street parking to serve the proposed development.

##### Code Enforcement:

F-1 No Comment

##### Health Department:

F-1 No Comment

##### Parks and Recreation:

F-1 No Comment

##### Police Department:

F-1 The Police Department has no objections to the parking reduction.

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