

June 01, 2006

ITEM NO. 1 - C.B.C. 595 - NEW MATTERS

Applicant: The Capital Hotel
The Capital Joint Venture/LDRP/LLC
P. Allen Smith & Assoc., Inc.-Agent

Address: 100 Main Street

Description: 100 Main Street, East ½ Block 78,
Original City of Little Rock

ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS:

1. A perimeter planting strip is required along any side of a vehicular use area that abuts right-of-way of any street or highway. This strip shall be at least nine (9) feet wide. Sec. 15-96(a.)
2. One (1) tree shall be planted for every seven hundred fifty (750) square feet of required landscape or buffer area with an average linear spacing of not less than thirty (30) feet. Three (3) shrubs or vines for every thirty (30) linear feet shall be planted in the perimeter planting strip. Sec. 15-96(b.)
3. Interior landscape areas shall comprise at least eight (8) percent of any vehicular use area containing twelve (12) or more parking spaces. Sec. 15-97 (a.)
4. Trees shall be included in the interior landscape areas at the rate of one (1) tree for every twelve (12) parking spaces.
5. The city official may waive not more than twenty-five (25) percent of the requirements.

VARIANCE REQUESTED:

1. Permission to allow a portion of the perimeter landscaping strip to be located within the public right-of-way.
2. Permission to allow a reduction of the minimum landscape strip, behind the public right-of-way, from 6.9 feet to 4.5 feet.
3. Permission to allow a reduction in the minimum interior landscaping requirement from 3,430 square feet to 1,511 square feet.
4. Permission to allow a reduction in the minimum number of interior trees to be planted from 13 to 4.

FINDINGS:

The UU zoned property located at 100 Main Street is currently occupied by a multistory building which contains office space and a parking deck. The building occupies the entirety of the half

block on the west side of Main Street, from Markham to Second Streets. The property owners propose to remove the building and construct in its place a surface parking lot to serve as valet parking for the adjacent Capitol Hotel. The parking lot is to contain 173 spaces, with access drives from both Markham and Second Streets. Portions of the parking lot will allow for double and triple stacked parking. The lot will be enclosed with an ornamental brick and steel fence and landscaping.

On April 24, 2006, the Board of Zoning Adjustment approved several variances from the Zoning Ordinance in conjunction with the proposed parking lot. A variance was approved to allow the surface parking lot to be located between the building and the abutting street. A variance was approved to allow a reduced street buffer width of 4.5 feet on the Main Street perimeter. A variance was approved to allow the double and triple stacked parking spaces, with some of the spaces having a reduced depth. A variance was approved to allow a sidewalk design different than that required in the Uu district. The last variance allowed the elimination of street trees due to the overhead power lines for the trolley system.

The property owner is now requesting several variances from the Landscape Ordinance to allow development of the proposed parking lot.

The first variance requested is from the perimeter planting strip requirement of Section 15-96 (a) to permit a reduced planting strip along the Main Street perimeter. The Code requires a width of 6.9 feet for this strip based on a twenty-five percent reduction for development in the mature area of the City. The applicant proposes a 14.5-foot wide planting strip, only 4.5 feet of which is located on the property. The remaining 10-foot portion is located in the public right-of-way.

The second variance is from the perimeter planting strip requirement of Section 36-96 (b) to permit a reduction in the number of trees within the three street perimeter planting strips. The Code requirement is 5 trees on the Markham Street perimeter, 10 trees on the Main Street perimeter and 5 trees on the Second Street perimeter. The applicant proposes to plant 2 trees on the Markham Street perimeter, 5 trees on the Main Street perimeter and 2 trees on the Second Street perimeter.

The third variance is from the interior landscape area requirement of Section 15-97 (a) to permit a reduction in the area of interior landscaping. The Code requires a total area of 3,430 square feet of interior landscape area for this parking lot. The applicant proposes a total area of 1,511 square feet.

The final variance is from the interior landscape area tree ratio requirement of Section 36-97 (c) to permit a reduction in the number of required interior trees from 13 to 4.

Staff is supportive of the requested variances. The property is currently occupied from property line to property line by a building that contains a parking deck. Any landscaping around the site is minimal at best. The proposed redevelopment, even with the requested variances, should result in a more attractive site. The width of the planting strips on the Markham and Second Street perimeters are 11 feet and 10 feet respectively, exceeding the 9 feet required by the landscape ordinance. Although the Main Street perimeter planting strip is only 4.5-feet in width on the

applicant's property, an area 14.5-feet in width will be landscaped, including the area within the right-of-way. The applicant has proposed to help mitigate the reduction in numbers of plants and area of landscaping by increasing the size of trees and shrubs to be planted. Within the perimeter planting strips, the applicant has proposed to plant October Glory Red Maples with a 3-1/2 inch caliper; larger than the 2-inch caliper required by Code. Within the street perimeter planting strips, the applicant proposes to plant Needlepoint Hollies 4 feet on center with a height of 48 inches at planting; taller than the 30 inches required by the Code. Seven-gallon size Evergreen Clematis vines will be planted along the street perimeters to grow up on the decorative fence. Additional plantings consisting of a Yoshino Cherry tree and azalea shrubs will be located at the corner of Main and Second Streets. Each of the interior islands will contain two Tulip Poplar trees with a caliper of 3-1/2 inches and nine Needlepoint Hollies with a height of 48 inches at planting. Landscaping on the Louisiana Street perimeter of the site, west of the hotel, will also be upgraded.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the requested variances subject to compliance with the following variances:

1. Compliance with the approved plan, including plant size.
2. A franchise must be obtained for all improvements located in the public right-of-way.