

October 05, 2006

ITEM NO. 1 - C.B.C. 596 - NEW MATTERS

Applicant: Simmons Bank
Development Consultants, Inc.
Agent, Robert Brown

Address: 5000 W. Markham

Description: Lots 3, 4, 5, & 6, Pfeifer Addition

ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS:

1. A perimeter planting strip is required along any side of a vehicular use area that abuts adjoining property. This strip shall be at least nine (9) feet wide.
2. Not more than twenty-five (25) percent of the perimeter planter area may be shifted from one area of the site to another area of the site.

VARIANCE REQUESTED:

1. Reduction of a portion of the required northern perimeter landscaping strip.

FINDINGS:

The property located at 5000 West Markham Street was formerly occupied by a McDonald's restaurant and its associated parking. The building has been razed and the site has been cleared of all improvements. Simmons First National Bank proposes to redevelop the site for a branch bank facility. The new development will consist of a 2,600 square foot building with three drive-through lanes for teller and ATM services. Nine parking spaces will be provided. On September 14, 2006, the Planning Commission approved a Planned Development rezoning application for the site. The Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to the Board of Directors after the City Beautiful Commission's action.

The site is relatively small, being 100 feet wide and 287 +/- feet deep. Due to the narrow width of the site, there are two variances associated with the required perimeter landscape strips. The applicant is proposing a perimeter strip of approximately 6.5 feet in width along the eastern (Jackson Street) perimeter and a perimeter strip width of approximately 4.5 feet along a portion of the western perimeter. Since the site is located in the designated mature area of the City, the landscape strip can be 6.9 feet in width; a 25% reduction of the typical 9-foot requirement found in Section 15-96 of the Code.

Staff is supportive of the requested variances. The proposed redevelopment of this infill site as a new bank will result in a more aesthetically pleasing property than has existed in the thirty years

it was occupied by the fast food restaurant. The site sits below the level of Jackson Street by as much as 5 feet. A retaining wall will be located along this perimeter ranging in height from 2.5 to 5 feet. The bank is proposing to place landscaping along both the high and low sides of the retaining wall. The number of required shrubs and trees within this perimeter will exceed Ordinance requirements. The reduction in the perimeter strip width on the western perimeter is for only the north half of the site where it abuts a parking lot for an adjacent office use. The southern half of the western perimeter strip will be larger than required by the Ordinance. Again, in this strip, the number of trees and shrubs will comply with Ordinance requirements.

The proposed development has been designed to fit within the limits of the property and to respect normal setback and landscape requirements as closely as possible. Although the new development does not fully comply with all typical Ordinance standards, staff feels the proposed development will be a good addition to this mature neighborhood.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the requested perimeter landscape strip variances.