

City Beautiful Commission

Variance Summary Sheet



Meeting Date of Variance Application: December 7, 2006

ITEM NO. 2 - C.B.C. 601 - NEW MATTERS

Applicant: Mike Berg, Owner
Best Car Wash

Address: 2801 W. Markham

Description: Lot 1, Block 5, Young's Park Addition

ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Section 15-96. (a) Requires a perimeter planting strip, which abuts any street to be at least nine (9) feet wide. In the designated mature area of the City, that may be reduced to 6.75 feet.

Section 15-96. (b) Requires that trees planted in the perimeter planting strip have an average linear spacing of not less than thirty (30) feet.

VARIANCE REQUESTED:

1. Variances are requested to allow the street perimeter landscape strips to be in the public right-of-way and to allow for spacing of greater than thirty (30) feet between two (2) of the street perimeter trees.

FINDINGS:

The C-3 zoned lot located at 2801 W. Markham Street is currently occupied by a four-bay, self serve car wash with vacuum islands. The building has reduced setbacks on all perimeters. There is virtually uncontrolled access to the site, with curb cuts onto Woodrow, Pearl and two curb cuts onto Markham.

The applicant proposes to completely redevelop the site for a two bay automatic car wash. All of the existing structures will be removed with the exception of the equipment room. The new structure will accommodate two, side-by-side automatic car wash tunnels. A large window on the Markham street façade will allow viewing into the car wash tunnels. Access to the site will be completely redesigned; with an entry-only driveway off of Markham and an exit-only driveway on to Pearl. New sidewalks and landscaping will be installed on all three street perimeters. New screening fencing and the existing equipment room will provide screening along the south perimeter where the abutting property is also zoned C-3.

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On November 9, 2006, the Planning Commission approved a conditional use permit to allow the new car wash. . Due to the small size of the property, made even smaller by additional right-of-way dedication required, there are several variance related to driveway spacing, building setbacks and landscaping.

All of the street perimeter landscaping is proposed to be located in the right-of-way of the abutting streets. Staff is supportive of the variance request. Due to the small size of the property, it will be virtually impossible to redevelop it without this variance. There is no real on site parking, just the driveway entering and exiting the carwash. The applicant is proposing to install additional landscaping on the north side of the new building, to provide a more pleasing appearance form the main street. All landscape areas will be sodded and an irrigation system will be installed.

The spacing between two of the trees on the Markham perimeter is approximately 43 feet, more than the maximum spacing of 30 feet allowed by the Code. As previously mentioned, there is a large window in the front wall of the tunnel building that allows for viewing into the tunnels. The slight increase in the spacing of the trees occurs at this point so that the trees do not block visibility into the car wash. This request was specifically made by the Little Rock Police Department. Sector cars occasionally park across the street from the carwash and with increased visibility; there will likely be less chance of problem activities taking place on the site. There will be no vacuum islands on the property, reducing possible loitering on the site.

Staff believes the applicant has done a good job of locating the proposed car wash on a very tight site. Replacing the existing self- serve car wash with the proposed new automatic car wash will, in staff's opinion, benefit the neighborhood.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the requested variances.