



DOCKET ITEM #8

**Special Use Permit #2011-0016**  
**605 Little Street- Single Family Dwelling**

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Application	General Data	
Consideration of a request to construct a single family dwelling on a substandard lot.	<b>Planning Commission Hearing:</b>	September 8, 2011
	<b>City Council Hearing:</b>	September 17, 2011
<b>Address:</b> 605 Little Street	<b>Zone:</b>	R-2-5/Single and Two Family
<b>Applicant:</b> Brian Thomas	<b>Small Area Plan:</b>	Potomac West

**Staff Recommendation:** APPROVAL subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the recommended permit conditions found in Section III of this report.  
**Staff Reviewers:** Nathan Randall [nathan.randall@alexandriava.gov](mailto:nathan.randall@alexandriava.gov)

**CITY COUNCIL ACTION, SEPTEMBER 17, 2011:** City Council approved the Planning Commission action.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, SEPTEMBER 8, 2011:** On a motion by Mr. Dunn, seconded by Mr. Jennings, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the request, subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and staff recommendations. The motion passed on a vote of 7 to 0.

**Reason:** The Planning Commission agreed with staff analysis.

**Speakers:**  
 Stephen Kulinski, representing the architect, spoke in support of the application and answered questions from the Planning Commission. He agreed to install a six-foot tall board-on-board privacy fence to screen the proposed parking area from the property’s eastern neighbor at 604 Ramsey Street.

Greg Knott, 202 E. Oak Street, spoke in support of the request.

Carla Grano, 604 Ramsey Street, expressed concern regarding stormwater run-off and the location of proposed off-street parking.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 7, 2011:** On a motion by Mr. Dunn, seconded by Mr. Jennings, the Planning Commission deferred the request. The motion passed on a vote of 4 to 1, with Ms. Fossum voting no and with Mr. Wagner and Mr. Robinson absent.

Reason: The Planning Commission believed that the applicant needed additional time to address concerns raised by immediate neighbors.

Speakers:

Carla Grano, 604 Little Street, stated her concern about the loss of trees and the existing playground equipment on the lot. She stated that the proposed parking spaces could increase traffic in the alley and asked for a screening fence to be placed around the proposed parking spaces.

Alan Dubow, 601 Little Street, stated that the lot was not suitable for building a new house due to its small size and that the house next-door has an addition located close to the property line.

Angela Venier, 606 Little Street, expressed concern about potential stormwater issues and the proposed building height in relation to other homes in the neighborhood.

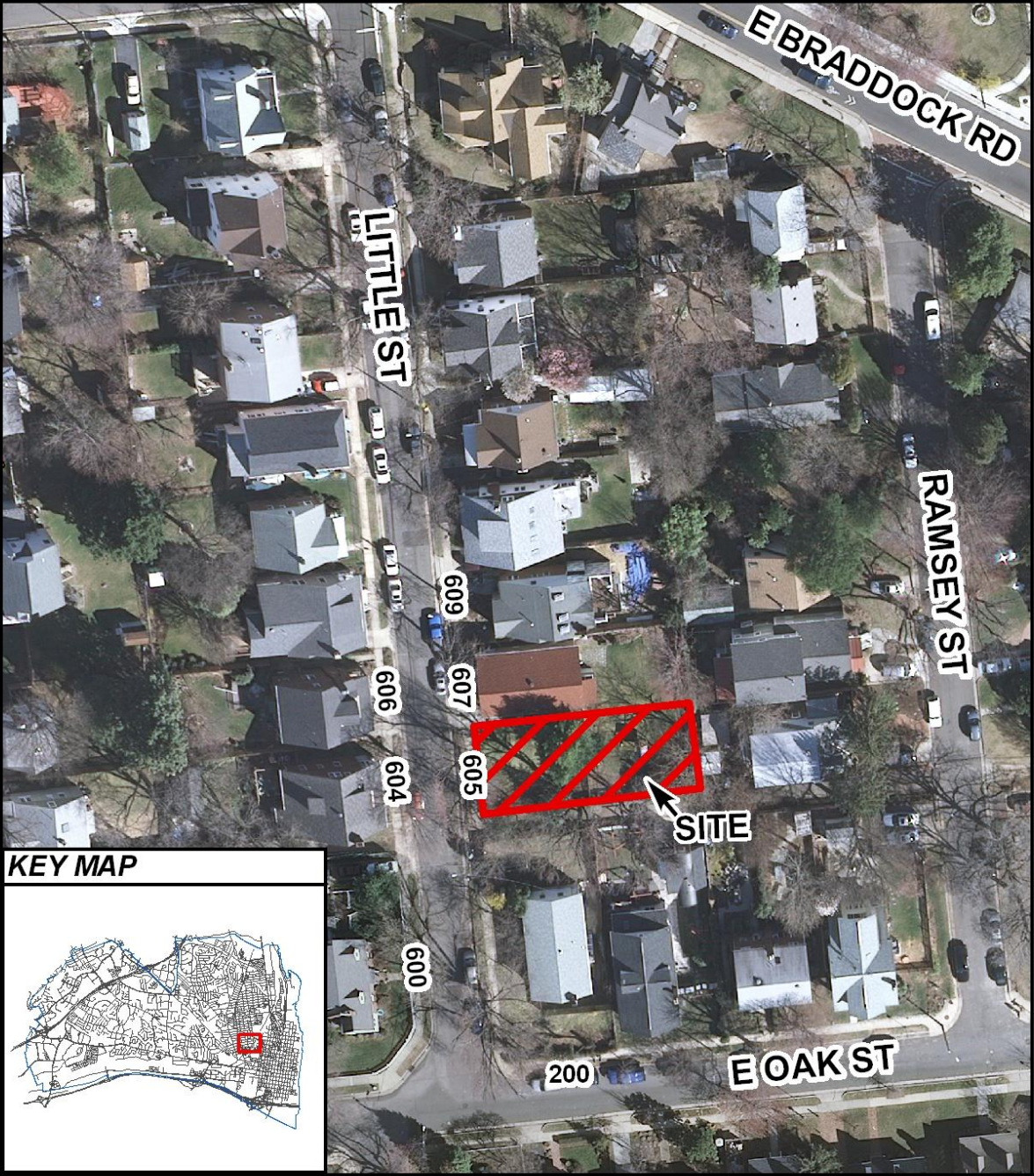
Scott Ruggiero, 701 Little Street, shared his concern that the proposed dwelling is really two stories in height and is out of character with the neighborhood.

Pam Townsend, 604 Little Street, expressed concern about the bulk of the proposed house and asked for postponement of the case to give new next-door owners the opportunity to share their thoughts about the proposed dwelling.

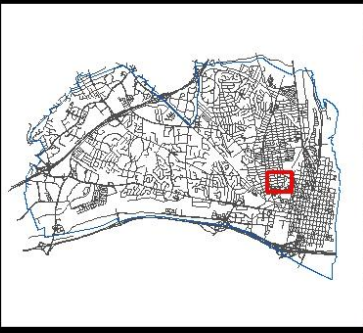
Peter Watkins, 604 Little Street, stated that he was pleased with some of the applicant's revisions compared to his original proposal but shared concerns about the home being two-stories tall, the removal of trees, and stormwater mitigation.

Marguerite Lang, as Rosemont Citizens Association President, stated that the association narrowly approved of the applicant's proposal. As a neighborhood resident speaking for herself, she voiced support for the proposal and stated that the design was appropriate for the neighborhood.

Steve Kulinski, architect for the applicant, spoke in support of the request and answered questions from the Planning Commission.



KEY MAP



SUP#2011-0016

9/8/2011



## I. DISCUSSION

The applicant, Brian Thomas represented by Steve Kulinski, architect, requests Special Use Permit approval to construct a single-family dwelling on a substandard lot at 605 Little Street.

### SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is one lot of record with 40 feet of frontage on Little Street, 100 feet of depth, and a total lot area of 4,000 square feet. A 15-foot alley runs along the southern side of the property.

The surrounding area is comprised of primarily single-family residential dwellings along with some two-family residential dwellings.



### PROPOSAL

The applicant requests SUP approval to construct a one-and-a-half story single-family dwelling on this substandard lot. The dwelling is proposed to be 1,795 square feet in size and will measure 22.9 feet in height. The design of the dwelling, which has been refined as a result of discussions between the applicant and staff, includes a roofline parallel to the street and a roof design that achieves the appearance of a one-and-a-half story building rather than two full stories. The front façade includes a front porch spanning the entire width of the house and a second-story dormer.

### ZONING

The property is located in the R2-5/Single and Two-Family Residential zone, which ordinarily requires a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet, minimum lot width of 50 feet and minimum lot frontage of 40 feet for a single-family dwelling. The lot is substandard in terms of lot area and lot width, but meets the minimum lot frontage requirement.

Section 12-400 of the Zoning Ordinance permits construction of a single-family home on a substandard lot only with Special Use Permit approval and only if the substandard lot contains at least the lot area and at least the lot width and frontage exhibited by 50% of the developed lots on the block face. Given that a majority of the other lots on this block face are exactly the same size and shape as the subject lot, these threshold requirements have been met.

The proposal meets Zoning Ordinance requirements regarding setbacks, FAR, building height and threshold height. Additional zoning elements of the applicant's proposal can be found on the following page.

	<u>Requirement</u>		<u>Proposal</u>
Lot Size	5,000 SF Min		<b>4,000 SF</b>
Lot Width	50' Min		<b>40'</b>
Lot Frontage	40' Min		40'
Front Yard	Established setback	13.9'	13.9'
Side Yard (South)	1:3 with 7' min	7.04'	7.17'
Side Yard (North)	1:3 with 7' min	7.04'	7.17'
Rear Yard	1:1 with 7' min	22.9'	31.25'
Building Height	Max: prevailing plus 20% (23.04') OR 25' whichever is higher	25'	22.9'
Threshold Height	Max: prevailing plus 20%	3.9' + 20% = 4.68'	2.5'
FAR	0.45 max		0.45

MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The proposed use is consistent with the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for residential use.

PARKING

Pursuant to Section 8-200(A)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance, a minimum of two standard-size parking spaces are required for single-family detached dwellings. The applicant meets this parking requirement by providing two parking spaces to the rear of the dwelling which is reached from the adjacent alley.

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL



FIRST REVISION



THIRD REVISION



FINAL REVISION



## II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff does not object the applicant's request to construct a new single-family dwelling on this substandard lot. The proposed design of the dwelling and its placement on the lot is appropriate and generally compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Staff has worked with the applicant to refine the original proposal to achieve a better fit with the existing homes on the block. Although this block of Little Street has an eclectic mix of housing styles, many of the homes are relatively low in height, feature a roofline parallel to the street, and have a design which minimizes the appearance and massing of the second story. Some of these homes also feature a second-story dormer and a front porch that spans the entire length of the front building wall. Staff therefore recommended that the applicant consider revisions that would break up the tall front building wall to read more like a one-and-a-half story building from the street. Staff also suggested that the applicant consider incorporating additional elements seen in the neighborhood such as a longer front porch.

The applicant's first revision, as shown on the previous page, represented a significant departure from the original proposal. The overall design of the dwelling was changed to a one-and-a-half story bungalow, a style seen elsewhere on this block. It featured a roofline parallel to the street, a second-story dormer, and a full front porch. The first version also included a truncated or "half-hip" roof on either side of the dwelling that was later removed. Subsequent revisions to the proposal did not significantly change the overall design of the home but instead responded to staff's remaining concerns about the appropriateness of the overall building height.

These changes, when taken together and compared to the original proposal, have resulted in a dwelling more suitable for the neighborhood. The dwelling proposed for this substandard lot could be made even smaller and shorter than the applicant's final proposal, particularly given that some of the homes on the block face are less than 20 feet in height. However, the overall 22.9 foot building height proposed here is still lower than the 25-foot height limitation allowed under infill regulations and will not be perceptibly higher than some of the other homes in the block and the neighborhood. Staff also believes that the proposed threshold height, while less than the average on the block face, is reasonable and helps to achieve a lower overall building height. At least two other homes on this block of Little Street have a threshold height at or below the applicant's proposal.

The location of the house on the site and the provision of parking here are also appropriate for the area. The dwelling will be located at the prevailing front setback line, which at 13.9 feet is relatively close to the street compared to some neighborhoods in the City. The side yard setbacks, at just over seven feet, are also consistent with what exists in the neighborhood. In terms of parking, the applicant proposes to meet off-street parking requirements with a two-space parking pad located directly off the adjacent public alley. This arrangement is similar to other parking arrangements nearby in that parking is typically inconspicuous and located to the side of the dwelling. The provision of parking here also allows the dwelling to be set in the middle of the lot with equal side yard setbacks for an overall balanced appearance from the street.

The development of this lot will require the removal of several small and medium-sized trees. However, the applicant will be required to add trees and other approved landscaping to the site to achieve an overall crown coverage of at least 25% as required under infill regulations. Staff also notes that the existing street trees in front of the lot will remain since no new curb cuts are required for the new dwelling.

Finally, staff has heard potential concern from the neighborhood that the proposed new dwelling could exacerbate existing stormwater runoff issues on nearby properties. The grading plan process, which is required for new single-family homes, will evaluate the potential for drainage impacts and require remediation if necessary. Staff has also included condition language (Condition #2) requiring that the driveway be surfaced using a permeable paving system to help mitigate potential stormwater concerns.

Staff finds that the proposed new single-family dwelling is appropriate for this location and, subject to the conditions in Section III of this report, recommends approval of the request.

### **III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

Staff recommends **approval** of the Special Use Permit request subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. The design of the dwelling shall be substantially consistent with the submitted illustrations dated May 17, 2011 to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning & Zoning. (P&Z)
2. All new driveway/parking areas shall be surfaced with a permeable paving system to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning & Zoning. (P&Z)
3. A grading plan showing all improvements and alterations to the site shall be required prior to any land disturbing activities and must be approved by T&ES prior to the issuance of a building permit. (T&ES)
4. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 5-6-224 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
5. The applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (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 all plans submitted for approvals. (T&ES)

STAFF: Barbara Ross, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;  
Nathan Randall, Urban Planner.

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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:

- R-1 A GRADING PLAN showing all improvements and alterations to the site shall be required prior to any land disturbing activities and must be approved by T&ES prior to the issuance of a building permit. (T&ES)
- R-2 The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 5-6-224 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R-3 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R-4 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 all plans submitted for approvals. (T&ES)
- C-1 An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2500 square feet. An erosion and sediment control bond shall be posted prior to release of the grading plan. (Sec.5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C-2 An approved GRADING PLAN must be attached to the building permit application. City Code Section -5-6-224 requires that a grading plan be submitted to and approved by T&ES prior any land disturbing activities or the issuance of building permits for improvements involving:
- the construction of a new home;
  - construction of an addition to an existing home where either
  - the addition exceeds the area of the existing building footprint by 100% or more;
  - or, the construction of the addition results in less that 50% of the existing first floor exterior walls, in their entirety, remaining;
  - changes to existing grade elevation of 1-foot or greater;
  - changes to existing drainage patterns;
  - land disturbance of 2,500 square feet or greater.

Questions regarding the processing of grading plans should be directed to the T&ES Site Plan Coordinator at (703) 746-4064. Memorandum to Industry No. 02-08 was issued on April 28, 2008 and can be viewed online via the following link. <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/gradingPlanRequirements.pdf>

- C-3 If construction of the residential unit(s) result in land disturbing activity in excess of 2500 square feet, the applicant is required to comply with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's Zoning Ordinance for stormwater quality control. (T&ES)
- C-4 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.5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C-5 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-6 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design and must be included on the required Grading Plan. (Sec. 5-2-1) (T&ES)
- C-7 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)
- C-8 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. (T&ES)

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The following comments are for preliminary review only. Once the applicant has filed for a building permit, code requirements will be based upon the building permit plans. If there are any questions, the applicant may contact Thomas Sciulli, Plan Review Supervisor at 703-746-4901 or [thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov](mailto:thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov).
- C-1 A building permit is required to be issued prior to the start of any work.
- C-2 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-3 Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (IRC as amended)
- C-5 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides, with no openings permitted within the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. (USBC 704.5)

C-6 The applicant must obtain a Certificate of Occupancy prior to occupancy (use) of the structure (USBC 116.1).

Health:

F-1 No Comment

Parks and Recreation:

F-1 No Comments Received

Police Department:

F-1 No Comments Received

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