

January 5, 2000

MEMORANDUM

TO: Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Steve Adams, Acting Urban Design Supervisor

FROM: Laxmi Srinivas, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan- SP-93045/01  
Variance - VD-93045/01A  
Truman Park

The Urban Design staff has reviewed the site development plans for the subject proposal and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of APPROVAL with conditions of SP-93045/01, TCPII/125/93 and approval of VD-93045/01A.

EVALUATION

This Detailed Site Plan was reviewed and evaluated for compliance with the following criteria:

1. The requirements of the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance:
  - a. Section 27-440 regarding R-H Zone (Multifamily High-Rise Residential)
  - b. Section 27-441 regarding uses permitted in the R-H Zone
  - c. Section 27-230 regarding Variances
2. The requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.
3. Referrals.


FINDINGS

**Detailed Site Plan**

Based upon the evaluation and analysis of the subject application, the Urban Design staff recommends the following findings:

1. The subject development application is for multifamily dwellings consisting of 284 units. The applicant has stated that the proposed residential development will consist of luxury units that will attract high-income professionals. The development will consist of one- and two-bedroom units. The applicant requested by means of DPLS-257 a departure of 144 parking spaces of the 670 spaces required for the subject property pursuant to Section 27-568 (a)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance. The Variance application is for the proposed building coverage and parking compound and is presented in more detail in Findings 18 and 19 below.
2. Detailed Site Plan SP-93045 (for 180 units) for the subject site was approved by the Planning Board on November 3, 1994 (PGCPB No. 94-325). The applicant applied for a Variance at that time for parking in the required front yard. The Variance request was granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals. The applicant also received approval of a departure of 100 parking spaces of the 460 spaces required for the subject property as a companion case to SP-93045.
3. The subject property is a 9.67-acre lot on the southwest side of Harry S Truman Drive and Mt. Lubentia Way. The proposal consists of three residential buildings and parking compounds in the front and rear yards. One of the three proposed buildings consists of five residential structures grouped around a multi-storied structured parking building. The adjacent uses are as follows:

North:	Harry S Truman Drive
South:	Undeveloped park land owned by M-NCPPC
East:	Undeveloped park land owned by M-NCPPC
West:	Undeveloped park land owned by M-NCPPC

-  The proposal is consistent with all the requirements of Section 27-440 with the exception of the parking in the front yard and the building coverage requirements. Finding 18 below addresses the Variance application. The narrow shape of the lot, the extensive frontage along Harry S Truman Drive and the proposed density do not allow sufficient area for the required green space and parking. Therefore, the applicant is proposing a combination of surface parking and a multi-storied parking structure to fulfill the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. The proposal includes two independent buildings and a group of buildings connected to a multi-storied parking structure. A swimming pool is proposed between the two independent buildings and the group of buildings around the multi-storied parking structure. The swimming pool is screened from Harry S Truman Drive by a block wall. The building on the south side of the swimming pool includes the clubhouse and the sales offices.

The main entrance to the lot is along Harry S Truman Drive. The main entrance leads to the surface parking in the front and rear yards and continues into the multi-storied parking structure. Another entrance to the subject lot is proposed along the southern end of the lot on Harry S Truman Drive. This entrance provides access to the compactor and the multi-storied parking structure. The multi-storied parking structure will provide parking at every floor to the residents in the five buildings surrounding the parking structure. The surface parking will serve the residents in the two independent buildings.

5. The proposed architecture consists of brick and siding facades, sloping roof lines and cornice details. Some of the individual units will have private patios, decks, vaulted ceilings and lofts as amenities. The portion of the parking structure along Harry S Truman Drive will be screened by a row of apartments. The swimming pool will be screened from Harry S Truman Drive by a block wall and landscaping.

The subject lot has a frontage of more than 1,600 feet along Harry S Truman Drive. The proposed buildings will also have a frontage of approximately 1,100 feet along the street. The streetscape created by such a long four-storied facade will seem visually overpowering from the street. In order to reduce the overwhelming appearance of the facade, the applicant has created a combination of voids and masses by using a combination of architectural elements like sloping roofs, cornice details, brick and siding exterior, patios, etc. Staff is of the opinion that the overall architectural appearance can be enhanced to create a high-quality residential character for the project by extending the proposed alternate brick bays up to the roof line instead of up to the underside of the second-story windows. The streetscape can also be improved by providing a separate single-story clubhouse building adjacent to the pool. This structure will help break the extensive building facade created by the proposed buildings. The proposed block wall for screening the swimming pool will not be visually attractive. A brick or stone wall should be provided that will complement the colors and materials of the proposed buildings. Conditions of approval have been added to require the above changes.

6. The proposal is subject to the requirements of Section 4.1 (Residential Requirements) and Section 4.3 (Parking Requirements) of the *Landscape Manual*. The proposed landscaping complies with the requirements of Section 4.3. Although the applicant has not specifically indicated the location of trees to comply with the requirements of Section 4.1, the trees provided in the woodland conservation area and the reforestation areas may be adequate to meet the requirements of this section. A condition of approval has been added to provide additional trees (if required) to meet the requirements of this section. Additional ornamental trees and shrubs should be provided to soften the view of the swimming pool. Section 27-440 (b) of the Zoning Ordinance states that the outdoor lighting in the parking lots in the R-H Zone not be more than ten feet above ground level. Conditions of approval have been added to address these issues.
7. The Permits Review Section (Windsor to Srinivas, November 18, 1999) has requested minor revisions to the drawings. A condition of approval is recommended to ensure these revisions to the drawings are made.
8. The Community Planning Division (Wilkerson to Srinivas, November 28, 1999) has stated that there are no master plan issues associated with this application.
9. The Transportation Planning Section (Masog to Srinivas, November 17, 1999) has stated that the Preliminary Plat of Subdivision 4-92114 states that the site was analyzed for 288 multifamily units. The conditions of approval of 4-92114 require that the applicant obtain the approval of the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) for the

access points. The conditions also require that the dead-end parking aisles be discouraged. The architectural design of the building conceals the parking structure. Therefore, the entrances to the parking structure are not visible from the street and are proposed between two buildings. Due to this unique design, it is not possible to provide surface parking without dead-ends. The site constraints like required setbacks and green area also restrict the design flexibility to accommodate parking without dead-ends. Therefore, the applicant has provided surface parking with only three dead-ends. The applicant has improved the access to the recycling/compactor area as suggested by the Transportation Planning Section. A condition of approval has been added to obtain approval of the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) for the access points.

10. The Natural Resources Division (Markovich to Srinivas, October 25, 1999) has stated that the proposed development will not impact any wetlands, streams and floodplains, but will impact the buffers of these features. A variation was granted in conjunction with the Preliminary Plat of Subdivision 4-92114 to allow disturbance to the buffers. The applicant will be required to obtain appropriate Federal and State permits for any future disturbance to the buffers. A Type I Tree Conservation Plan (TCPI/77/92) was reviewed and approved in conjunction with Preliminary Plat of Subdivision 4-92114. A Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCPII/125/93) was reviewed and approved in conjunction with Detailed Site Plan SP-93045. Minor revisions are required to the revised TCPII/125/93 submitted along with this Detailed Site Plan application. Conditions of approval have been added to require these revisions.
11. The Department of Public Works and Transportation (Johnson to Srinivas, December 16, 1999) has stated that there are some concerns with the access points. The applicant must coordinate the design of the access points with DPW&T. A condition of approval has already been added to require this.
12. The State Highway Administration (McDonald to Srinivas, November 10, 1999) has no objections to approval of the Detailed Site Plan.
13. The Department of Environmental Resources (De Guzman to Srinivas, November 19, 1999) has stated that the stormwater management concept plan must be revised to reflect the new changes. A condition of approval has been added to require this.
14. The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (Maholtz to Srinivas, October 26, 1999) has stated that there is an approved authorization within the limits of the site.
15. The Subdivision Section (Chellis to Srinivas, November 12, 1999) stated that the proposal is consistent with the approved Preliminary Plat of Subdivision 4-92114. Compliance with certain of the design standards in the conditions of approval for the Preliminary Plat have been addressed by the Transportation Planning Section and the Environmental Planning Section. The Preliminary Plat also included conditions that are of concern to the Urban Design Section and that deal with the construction of park facilities. Staff has addressed them in this Finding and in Finding 16 below for compliance of the subject Detailed Site Plan with the conditions of the Preliminary Plat.

Condition 15 of the Preliminary Plat 4-92114 requires that special attention be given to the following:

- a. *the sensitive siting of buildings and recreational facilities adjacent to the wooded floodplain area in an effort to take full advantage of scenic views, enhance the existing park-like setting, and to encourage use by residents.*

The applicant has oriented the buildings toward the park property at the rear and Harry S Truman Drive at the front of the property to take full advantage of scenic views.

- b. *safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian access throughout the site. Dead-end parking aisles will be discouraged.*

The applicant has provided the smallest number of dead-end parking aisles possible consistent with site constraints and the unusual design concept employing a parking structure.

- c. *The provision of a tot lot, picnic area and possibly a space suitable for community gardens within the development.*

The applicant has provided a swimming pool and recreational facilities inside the buildings. However, a tot-lot, picnic area and community gardens have not been provided. A condition of approval has been added to provide these amenities or appropriate substitute facilities.

- d. *The design and location of any proposed parking structures should be designed as integral components of the overall site and be attractive and architecturally compatible with the rest of the site architecture.*

The applicant has proposed a multi-storied parking structure to minimize the need for surface parking. The multi-storied parking structure is also screened by apartments.

- e. *The design of any future stormwater management facilities as site amenities.*

The applicant has proposed rain gardens in the landscaped areas along the street. A condition of approval has been added to require Department of Environmental Resources approval for the rain gardens.

Condition 17 of 4-92114 required that the applicant obtain approval of the exact location of the site access point along Harry S Truman Drive from the Department of Public Works and Transportation. A Detailed Site Plan approval for SP-93045 was obtained after the Preliminary Plat approval. The location of the access points was approved by DPW&T at that time. Only minor adjustments are being made to the access points to fit this proposal.

DPW&T has required that the applicant obtain approval of the access points. A condition of approval has been added to obtain approval from DPW&T prior to certification of the subject Detailed Site Plan application.

16. The Department of Parks and Recreation (Palfrey to Srinivas, telephone conversation, January 5, 2000) indicates that the subject application should demonstrate compliance with the conditions of the Preliminary Plat 4-92114 and amendment (if needed) to the public recreational facilities agreement due to the increase in the number of units compared to the previous approval. Conditions of approval have been added to require these revisions.
17. With the proposed conditions, the Detailed Site Plan SP-93045/01 is found to represent a reasonable alternative for satisfying the site design guidelines without requiring unreasonable costs and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.

### **Variance Application**

18. The subject application includes requests for two Variances from the requirements of the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance:
  - a. Section 27-442 (c) that limits the building coverage in the R-H Zone to 12% of the net tract area. The applicant is proposing a building coverage of 28%.
  - b. Section 27-442 (e) that prohibits parking compounds in the required front, side and rear yards of lots in the R-H Zone. The applicant is proposing parking in the front and rear yards.
19. Section 27-230 of the Zoning Ordinance requires the Planning Board to make the following findings regarding an application for a variance:
  - (1) *A specific parcel of land has exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape, exceptional topographic conditions, or other extraordinary situations or conditions.*

The site is an isolated irregular-shaped parcel of land in the R-H Zone. The length of the site is more than 1,600 feet and the width of the site along most of the site is approximately 200 feet. Thus in comparison with most other lots in the vicinity, the lot is exceptionally shallow. The existence of some floodplain along the western edge of the property reduces its usable width even more.
  - (2) *The strict application of this Subtitle will result in peculiar or unusual practical difficulties to, or exceptional or undue hardship upon the owner of the property*

Given the constraints of the subject site and the extremely limited amount of building coverage (12%) allowed in the R-H Zone, it is necessary to reduce the building coverage by increasing the height of the proposed building. However, the

R-H Zone includes a sliding scale setback requirement so that the higher the building, the greater the yard requirement. Given the exceptional narrowness of the lot, it is not possible to achieve a desired density that makes the project economically viable with a higher building that meets the setback requirements. Variances are required for higher buildings as well as those of the height proposed. A higher building would also increase the building construction cost. In order to achieve an economically viable density with reasonable construction costs, the height of the buildings has to be restricted to four stories, resulting in the proposed 28% building coverage. Strict application of the 12% building coverage requirement will result in unusual practical difficulties for the applicant because it will make it impossible to implement the applicant's novel design in a way that will be economically feasible and that will fit on the subject site. Granting of the Variance will allow the applicant to use the property without the practical difficulty inherent in trying to create a workable design for such a shallow site employing surface parking only instead of the creative structured parking proposal employed in this Detailed Site Plan. A Variance was previously granted by the Board of Appeals for parking in the required yards as part of the processing of the previous Detailed Site Plan SP-93045.

- (3) *The Variance will not substantially impair the intent, purpose or integrity of the General Plan or Master Plan.*

The proposal is a multi-family use in a multi-family zone as required by the Largo-Lottsford Master Plan. The Community Planning Division has indicated that the proposal does not raise any master plan issues. Granting of the Variance will not substantially impair the intent, purpose or integrity of the General Plan or Master Plan.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation and analysis, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and APPROVE SP-93045/01, TCPII/125/93 and VD-93045/01A subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to certification of the Detailed Site Plan, the following shall be accomplished:
  - a. The applicant shall revise the architectural and site/grading plans to show the following:
    - (1) extension of the proposed alternate brick bays up to the roof line instead of up to the underside of the second-story windows.
    - (2) provision of a free-standing single-story clubhouse building with an interesting roof line adjacent to the swimming pool. The open space around the swimming pool shall not be reduced. The overall design of the proposed clubhouse and the apartment buildings around it shall be approved by the Urban Design Review Section.

- (3) replacement of the proposed block wall with a brick or stone wall that will complement the colors and materials of the proposed buildings.
  - (4) the required parking ratio and calculations as required in Section 27-568 of the Prince Georges County Zoning Ordinance
  - (5) a typical demonstrating dimensions of all parking spaces. This is to include the parking for the physically handicapped.
  - (6) provision of a tot-lot, picnic area and community gardens or appropriate alternative recreational amenities acceptable to the Planning Board or its designee.
  - (7) parking breakdown for the clubhouse within the parking schedule
  - (8) driveway aisle widths for all levels of parking within the parking garage.
  - (9) loading information within the site data
  - (10) parking garage level numbers
  - (11) information regarding compliance with Section 4.1 of the *Landscape Manual*
  - (12) parking lot lighting not exceeding ten feet in height from grade
  - (13) all elevations of all the proposed buildings and an entire streetscape elevation.
- b. the applicant shall revise the Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCPII/125/93) to show the following:
- (1) corrected acreage of the five (5) reforestation areas totaling 0.84 acres and not 0.62 acres on the Reforestation Computation and Planting List
  - (2) corrected acreage of the Tree Save Areas totaling 0.53 acres (or a shortage of 0.35 acres). If the Tree Save Area #4 (0.16 acres) is entirely within the floodplain, a shortage of 0.51 acres is to be indicated and accounted for.
  - (3) the locations of the reforestation signage.
- c. the applicant shall obtain a DPW&T street construction and driveway entrance permit from the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) or other written approval from DPW&T of the location and design of the proposed entrances to this site based upon the current proposed layout.



- d. the applicant shall obtain approval of the stormwater management concept and technical plans from the Department of Environmental Resources.
  - e. the applicant shall obtain written clarification from the Planning Director or her designee regarding applicability of Section 27-551 (e), Tandem Parking to this site.
- 2. Prior to release of building permits, the applicant shall amend the existing public recreational facilities agreement and submit a performance bond, letter of credit or suitable financial guarantee, if determined to be necessary by the Department of Parks and Recreation. The applicant shall also amend the private recreational facilities agreement for on-site facilities in accordance with the requirements of the Development Review Division.
- 3. Prior to obtaining grading permits, the applicant shall submit and obtain approval of detailed plans for the construction of all off-site recreational facilities and improvements including trails from the Department of Parks and Recreation. The off-site facilities shall include the New Orchard Community Park and Parcel B (Southwest Branch Stream Valley Park).