



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of May 17, 2008**

DATE: May 5, 2008

SUBJECT: U-3195-08-1 USE PERMIT for a comprehensive sign plan at 2100 N. Pierce St. (RPC #16-006-001).

Applicant:

Fort Georgetown Associates LTD

By:

Bob Biroonak
Art Display Co.
401 Hampton Park Boulevard
Capitol Heights, MD 20743

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the use permit for a comprehensive sign plan subject to the conditions of the staff report.

ISSUE: This is a use permit for a comprehensive sign plan, and no issues have been raised.

SUMMARY: The applicant requests a comprehensive sign plan to replace two (2) existing freestanding project identification signs with two (2) signs mounted on a proposed decorative brick wall at each of the two (2) main site entrances. The proposed signs are smaller than the existing signs and are consistent in character and scale with other structures in the neighborhood. The proposed signs should not create an adverse impact on the community, and meet the intent of the County *Sign Guidelines*. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the comprehensive sign plan subject to the conditions of the staff report.

BACKGROUND: The following provides additional information regarding the subject property:

Site: The Park Georgetown Apartments is a 6.58 acre site bound by North 22nd Street to the north, Route 66 and Lee Highway to the south and North 21st Road to the east and west. The project is comprised of 32 garden-style masonry apartment buildings constructed in 1953. The apartment buildings are connected through an internal sidewalk network. The main vehicular site access is from North Pierce Street and North Quinn Street.

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Rasheda DuPree McKinney, CPHD, Planning Division

PLA-4966

Zoning: The subject site is zoned “RA6-15”, Apartment Dwelling Districts. Section 34.F.3 states that one (1) building name sign is permitted in “RA” districts on the basis of one-quarter (1/4) square foot per dwelling unit. The project contains a total of 202 dwelling units which permits a maximum sign area of 50.50 square feet. The applicant requests one (1) additional freestanding project identification sign to replace the existing project identification sign at a second site entrance. The request for two (2) freestanding project identification signs is consistent with the *Sign Guidelines* which permits more than one (1) freestanding project identification sign for multiple-building projects.

Land Use: The subject site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as Low-Medium Residential, 16-36 units per acre.

Neighborhood: The subject site is located in the North Highlands Civic Association. The association was notified of the comprehensive sign plan application, but to date has not responded to staff’s request for comments on this request.

DISCUSSION: Currently there is one (1) existing freestanding sign at the vehicular entrance to the site at the intersection of North Quinn Street and Lee Highway. The sign reads, “Ft. Georgetown Apartments,” and provides a telephone number and directional arrow. The existing sign measures 3 feet by 10 feet (30 square feet). There is a second existing freestanding sign at the vehicular entrance to the site at the intersection of North Pierce Street and North 22nd Street. The sign reads, “Ft. Georgetown Rental Office,” and provides a telephone number and directional arrow. The second existing sign measures 3 feet by 7 feet (21 square feet).

The applicant proposes to replace each of these two signs with two freestanding project identification signs at the existing locations. Both the sign at the intersection of North Quinn Street and Lee Highway and the sign at the intersection of North Pierce Street and North 22nd Street will read, “Van Metre Park Georgetown Apartments, A Signature Rental Community,” and will feature the project logo. Each sign will measure 6.33 feet by 3.12 feet (19.74 square feet). The request for a total of 39.48 square feet of sign area is in compliance with 50.50 square foot maximum permitted sign area. Both signs will be mounted to a proposed curved brick wall which will measure 5.12 feet in height and 13.10 to 15.30 feet in length. Both signs will be located outside of the established 25-foot minimum vision clearance in compliance with Zoning Ordinance Section 34.D.4 requirements.

Existing Sign Text	Existing Sign Area	Proposed Sign Text	Proposed Sign Area
Ft. Georgetown Apartments	30 sq ft	“Van Metre Park Georgetown Apartments, A Signature Rental Community”	19.74 sq ft
Ft. Georgetown Rental Office	21 sq ft	“Van Metre Park Georgetown Apartments, A Signature Rental Community”	19.74 sq ft
Existing Sign Area	51 sq ft	Proposed Sign Area	39.48 sq ft

The County's Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings state that multiple freestanding signs may be approved for multi-building projects where there is more than one entrance to the project. The main access points for the Park Georgetown Apartments site are at the intersection of North Pierce Street and North 22nd Street and at the intersection of North Quinn Street and Lee Highway. The proposed location of a freestanding sign at each of these two (2) access points, to replace both existing signs, is consistent with the *Sign Guidelines*.

The *Sign Guidelines* state that freestanding signs are limited to project name, address, and directional information. The guidelines further state that signs for residential projects may include language referencing that property is for lease or rent as part of the message. The *Sign Guidelines* state that signs which do not meet these criteria must be approved by the County Board. The proposed signs will provide the project name, "Park Georgetown Apartments," and also have specialized text message beyond generic leasing text which indicate the property manager of the project, "Van Metre" and include the phrase, "A Signature Rental Community." Staff supports the inclusion of the property management information and the rental information text since it provides additional information to the public regarding the option to rent these units and provides the company responsible for providing rental information.

CONCLUSION: The proposed freestanding signs are consistent with the *Sign Guidelines* and provide visual cues signifying the entrance to a large multi-building residential rental community. The scale and design of the proposed signs and associated brick wall structures are consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood of predominantly masonry buildings. Staff finds that the request for two (2) signs is appropriate given the size of the site and the number of buildings throughout the site. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the comprehensive sign plan, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant agrees to limit the total freestanding signs to a maximum of two (2) project identification signs at the locations as shown on the drawings submitted to Arlington County from Lewis Scully Gionet Landscape Architects and dated March 2, 2007. The total area for each sign shall not exceed 19.74 square feet as shown on abovementioned drawings, and shall not exceed 5.12 feet in height.
2. The applicant agrees that the area at the base of the freestanding signs shall be landscaped with perennial ground cover or seasonal flowers planted in an area not less than two (2) feet in width at the base of each sign.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS: There are no previous County Board actions on this site.