



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of June 17, 2008

REVISED REPORT

DATE: ~~June 5, 2008~~ June 11, 2008

SUBJECT: SP #357 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT to remove architectural archway; 1600, 1650 Wilson Blvd. (RPC #17-010-037)

Applicant:

WRIT Limited Partnership

By:

Nan Walsh
Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich & Walsh
2200 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

REVISION EXPLANATION: A minor revision was made to new Condition #76 below by removing a word in the first paragraph, shown with highlighting and a strike-through, in order to clarify that elements added to the plaza be consistent with those in the attached drawing referenced in the condition.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the request to remove the arch and to replace it with a program of benches, lighting, and banners per new Condition #76.

ISSUE: This is a site plan amendment request to eliminate an archway designed as an architectural element between two buildings and spanning a publicly accessible plaza. Staff and the applicant have worked to develop an alternative treatment to enliven the plaza.

SUMMARY: The applicant has requested elimination of an architectural archway feature that was approved to span two buildings facing Wilson Boulevard, at the entrance to a publicly accessible plaza between them. Staff agrees that the arch is not a necessary feature of the site

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Lisa Maher, Planning Division, DCPHD

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plan, but elimination of the arch would require additional attention to the plaza to improve its attractiveness and usability. Staff and the applicant have agreed that a concept of additional benches, wall-mounted lighting, and a seasonal banner program would provide appropriate elements to increase its attractiveness to the public, and staff recommends approval of this concept. Final design details would remain to be worked out between staff and the applicant, with the cooperation of Rosslyn Renaissance, which are captured in new Condition #76.

BACKGROUND: In July 2002, the County Board approved incorporation of Site Plans #83 and #227, together with two additional properties, into new Site Plan #357 and approved two new residential buildings to the site, along with two existing office buildings which were to remain. The project included a variety of spaces open to the public on the site, including a plaza facing Wilson Boulevard between the previously existing office building at 1600 Wilson Boulevard and a new residential building at 1650 Wilson Boulevard. The project included an architectural arch feature spanning two buildings, across this plaza. The applicant now believes that the arch would not serve the purpose for which it was intended, and has requested to eliminate it from the site plan.

DISCUSSION: The approved arch was included in the project design during site plan review of the project, in response to a question regarding how the ground floor retail in the two buildings flanking the plaza would relate to each other. While the arch concept received support, it was not considered a critical element of the project. However, it does mark the entrance to the plaza. The plaza was designed with major plantings, but insufficient furniture to make it attractive and inviting to the public. Elimination of the arch would remove the only feature, other than a single bench, that would invite the public into the plaza. Staff recommended to the applicant that additional attention to the plaza design, including additional benches, lighting, and other elements to enliven the plaza could be a good alternative to the arch. The applicant requested additional time to develop a response, which led to a deferral of this request from the May 17 County Board meeting to the June 17 meeting. Subsequently, the applicant proposed additional benches, wall mounted lighting, and a program of banners attached to adjacent building walls facing the plaza. All of these elements would be located beyond the public sidewalk, within the plaza. These elements would create a more vibrant and attractive space. While the details of these elements have not been finalized, staff supports the concept and recommends approval of this alternative treatment, provided that the applicant works with staff and Rosslyn Renaissance to finalize the details, which would be approved by the County Manager. This process is laid out in new Condition #76.

CONCLUSION: Staff agrees that the approved architectural arch element spanning the two buildings facing Wilson Boulevard is not critical to the overall site plan, but additional treatment of the public plaza is necessary to make it useful and inviting. Staff and the applicant, with input from Rosslyn Renaissance, have agreed to a concept for improved treatment of the plaza with benches, wall-mounted lighting, and banners, and staff recommends new Condition #76 to provide for a final design of the elements that would be coordinated with Rosslyn Renaissance prior to approval by the County Manager.

NEW CONDITION #76:

- Whenever, under these conditions, anything is required to be done or approved by the County Manager, the language is understood to include the County Manager or his or her designee.

76. The developer agrees to finalize a design for additional elements in the plaza facing Wilson Boulevard that includes benches, wall-mounted lighting, and wall-mounted banners generally consistent with the drawings titled “Plaza Plan—Proposed Improvements” and “Plaza Banners—Schematic Elevation” dated May 28, 2008 and approved on June 17, 2008, and to install these additional elements prior to issuance of the master Certificate of Occupancy for Site Plan #357. The developer agrees to coordinate the final design with Rosslyn Renaissance, and shall submit the final design to, and obtain approval from, the County Manager prior to installation of any new element.

The banners shall be displayed on a continuous basis but changed seasonally. The banners shall be a maximum of 42 inches wide and 72 inches tall and shall have a minimum of ten (10) feet of clearance between the bottom of the banner and the plaza surface. They shall be made of nine (9) ounce or heavier “Sunbrella” or equal fabric. The graphics on the banners shall appear on both sides and shall contain no clearly understood commercial images or message content. The banners shall be secured at their top and bottom to the building wall so that the banners do not move freely. The banners shall be fastened at their bottom to the building wall securely enough to prevent the banner from breaking free. Maintenance of the banners shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant, and the banners shall be maintained in good condition. If the banners are removed, the applicant shall bear the cost of the removal of the banners and supports, and restoration of any damage to the walls where the supports were located.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

Site Plan #83

November 18, 1970	Approved a site plan for an office building at 1600 Wilson Boulevard subject to conditions of staff report.
November 6, 1971	Approved a six (6) month extension of the site plan approved for 1600 Wilson Boulevard subject to all previous conditions of site plan approval.
April 12, 1972	Approved an amendment permitting a 90-day extension of the approved site plan subject to all previous conditions of the site plan approval.
November 4, 1972	Denied a request for site plan amendment to use the penthouse floor area for storage and rental area and granted the deletion of the gas station as proposed, subject to the approval of the County Manager or his designee of a landscape plan.
January 6, 1973	Approved a site plan amendment permitting the installation of an elevator to the lower penthouse level. Approval also permitted a seven foot high storage level.
January 11, 1975	Approved an amendment permitting use of the lower penthouse floor for executive suite, restaurant, dinner theatre, private lunch and dinner group, or theatre operation. Also agreed that 7,665 square feet of commercial on the first floor will remain and allow use for IBM sales office and/or post office use.
July 31, 1976	Approved an amendment permitting an outdoor cafe having approximately 80 seats.
August 21, 1979	Deferred request to abandon storage use of upper penthouse level and to convert the storage use to business office use.
October 13, 1979	Approved an amendment to permit conversion of storage space in the upper penthouse level to office space.

February 8, 1986	Approved an amendment permitting live entertainment in conjunction with an existing restaurant.
December 6, 1986	Denied conversion of 1,000 square feet of designated commercial space to office gross floor area.
February 7, 1987	Continued a site plan amendment to permit live entertainment in conjunction with an existing restaurant.
March 7, 1987	Approved a site plan amendment to permit the conversion of 1,000 square feet of designated retail commercial space on the first floor to office gross floor area on a temporary basis (until September 30, 1991).
February 11, 1989	Discontinued a site plan amendment permitting live entertainment in an existing restaurant.
June 3, 1989	Approved a site plan amendment to permit live entertainment in an existing restaurant.
August 12, 1989	Deferred a site plan amendment to convert 687 square feet of street level commercial space to office.
September 9, 1989	Withdrew a site plan amendment to covert 687 square feet of street level commercial space to office.
November 21, 1989	Approved a site plan amendment to convert approximately 687 square feet of first floor retail space to office use.
March 10, 1990	Deferred a site plan amendment to the June 2, 1990 County Board meeting to delete condition requiring that on-site garage parking be available whenever the restaurant is open.
June 2, 1990	Denied a site plan amendment to delete the condition requiring that on-site garage parking be available whenever the restaurant is open and on-site garage parking shall be available during the hours stated in amended condition (#1), subject to all previous conditions, and with a review in six (6) months.

	Continued a site plan amendment for live entertainment in an existing restaurant on Fridays and Saturdays from 11:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
December 8, 1990	Continued a site plan amendment to modify the hours that on-site garage parking must be available to restaurant customers, subject to all previous conditions and with a review in six (6) months.
	Continued a site plan amendment for live entertainment in an existing restaurant on Fridays and Saturdays from 11:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
June 4, 1991	Continued a site plan amendment for live entertainment in an existing restaurant on Fridays and Saturdays from 11:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. and to modify the hours that on-site garage parking must be available to restaurant customers, subject to all previous conditions and review in one (1) year.
November 19, 1994	Renewed and extended a site plan amendment to permit the temporary conversion of 687 square feet of designated first floor retail space to office use until October 31, 1997.
October 4, 1997	Renewed and extended a site plan amendment to permit the temporary conversion of 687 square feet of designated first floor retail space to office use until October 31, 2000.
October 7, 2000	Discontinued a site plan amendment to permit the temporary conversion of 687 square feet of designated first floor retail space to office use.

Site Plan #227

March 2, 1985	Approved a change in land classification from “RA6-15”, Apartment Dwelling District, to “C-O-1.0”, Commercial Office Building, Hotel, and Apartment District. Approved a site plan for a two-story office building.
April 12, 1986	Approved a site plan amendment for two signs.

Site Plan #357

July 20, 2002

Approved a General Land Use Plan amendment from “Service Commercial” to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel along the northeastern portion of the site; “Medium” Office-Apartment-Hotel along the western portion of the site; and “High” Residential along the southern portion of the site. Designated the subject site as a “Special Affordable Housing Protection District” for the entire subject site and added Note 13.

Approved a change in land classification from "C-2" Service Commercial - Community Business Districts to "C-O-2.5" Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Apartment Districts (1618 Wilson Boulevard – RPC#17-010-024, lots 18 & 20); from "RA 6-15" Apartment Dwelling Districts to “RA-H-3.2” Multiple-family Dwelling and Hotel Districts (1611 Clarendon Boulevard – RPC# 17-010-003, lots 23 & 25, for area approx. 100 feet back from Clarendon Boulevard); from “C-O” Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts to “RA-H-3.2 (RPC# 17-010-001, lots 27 & 29); from "C-O-1.0" Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Apartment Districts to “C-O-2.5” (1701 Clarendon Boulevard, RPC # 17-010-035, lots 17, 19, &21); and from “RA6-15” to “C-O” (1611 Clarendon Boulevard, RPC# 17-010-003, lots 23 & 25, for area between approx. 100 feet from lot line along Clarendon Boulevard and the northern lot line along RPC 17-010-001, lots 22 & 24).

Approved a site plan incorporating Site Plans #83 and #227 and approved a new site plan with two existing office buildings to remain and two new residential buildings with ground floor retail.

May 17, 2008

Deferred consideration of a request to eliminate an arch approved at the entrance to the plaza facing Wilson Blvd.