DOCKET #: W2743

PROPOSED ZONING: Site Plan Amendment

EXISTING ZONING: RS-9-S

PETITIONER: Peggy N. Thomas, Ruby N. Easter, Glenda N. Ellis, Kenneth I. Childress, and Charles E. Nicholson for property owned by Same

SCALE: 1" represents 600'

STAFF: Roberts

GMA: 3

ACRE(S): 19.14

MAP(S): 612878, 612882
DRAFT ZONING STAFF REPORT

DOCKET # W-2743
STAFF: Gary Roberts

Petitioner(s): Peggy N. Thomas, Ruby N. Easter, Glenda N. Ellis, Kenneth I. Childress, and Charles E. Nicholson
Ownership: Same

REQUEST

From: RS-9-S (Residential Building, Single Family, and Planned Residential Development)
To: Site Plan Amendment

Both general and special use district zoning were discussed with the applicant(s) who decided to pursue the zoning as requested.
Acreage: 19.14

LOCATION:

Street: Southern terminus of Murray Road south of Kingswell Drive.
Jurisdiction: City of Winston-Salem.
Ward: North.

SITE PLAN

Proposed Use: Planned Residential Development of 88 single family homes.
Density: 4.59 dwelling units per acre.
No evidence of Type II bufferyard required around perimeter of subdivision

PROPERTY SITE/IMMEDIATE AREA

Existing Structures on Site: Single family home and accessory structures.
Adjacent Uses:
  North- Single family residential, zoned RS-12
  East- Single family residential, zoned RS-12
  Southeast- Bethabara Christian Church zoned RS-12
  South- Single family residential, zoned RS-12
  West- Single family residential, zoned RS-12

GENERAL AREA

Character/Maintenance: Well-maintained single family homes
Development Pace: Slow

HISTORY

Relevant Zoning Cases:

1. W-2719; RS-12 to RS-9-S (Residential Building, Single Family, and Planned Residential Development); approved September 7, 2004; Southern terminus of Murray Road south of Kingswell Drive, current site; 19.14 acres; Planning Board and staff recommended approval.

2. W-2641; RS-12 to RS-9; denied July 19, 2004; northwest corner of Hutchins Street and Pinewood Drive; 0.51 acre; Planning Board recommended approval, staff recommended denial.

3. W-2421; RS-9 to RS-7; denied October 2, 2000; west side of Pinewood Drive north of Bethabara Road; 0.73 acre; Planning Board and staff recommended denial.

4. W-2281; RS-12 to RS-7; approved January 4, 1999; south side of Hutchins Street across from Selena Street; 1.3 acres; Planning Board and staff recommended approval.

PHYSICAL FEATURES/ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Impact on Existing Features: The proposed site plan will remove much of the existing vegetation. Some amount of vegetation appears to be preserved along the periphery of the development and in the proposed common space.

Topography: The subject property experiences a total elevation change of approximately 58 feet, rising from about 838 feet along the site’s western border up to about 896 feet in the site’s northeastern corner.

Streams: Bethabara Branch, a perennial stream, lies about 550 feet west of the subject property.

Vegetation/habitat: The subject property is mostly covered with existing vegetation, except for some parts of the site’s eastern section.

Floodplains: The western border of the property lies about 500 feet from the Bethabara Branch floodplain.

Natural Heritage Sites: The subject property is about ½ mile from parts of Historic Bethabara.

Environmental Resources beyond the Site: The proposed site plan should not impact environmental resources beyond the site.

Water Supply Watershed: The site does not lie within the boundaries of a water supply watershed.

TRANSPORTATION

Direct Access to Site: Murray Road; Independence Road
Street Classification: Murray Road – Local Road; Independence Road – Local Road
Average Daily Traffic Count/Estimated Capacity at Level of Service D (Vehicles per Day):
Shattalon Drive between Murray Road and Bethabara Road = 10,000/11,100
Bethabara Road between Shattalon and Bethabara Park Boulevard = 3,300/16,100

Trip Generation/Existing Zoning: RS-9-S: 88 units x 9.57 (SFR Trip Rate) = 842 Trips per Day

Trip Generation/Proposed Zoning: No change in number of trips generated.

Planned Road Improvements: Shattalon Drive between Reynolda Road and University Parkway from 2-3 lanes to 3 lanes; 2005-2014

Sidewalks: None existing on adjacent streets, proposed along one side of new interior streets.

Transit: Route 16 along Bethabara Road; Route 44 along Bethabara Road and Shattalon Drive.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

GMP Area (Legacy): Suburban Neighborhoods (GMA 3)

Relevant Comprehensive Plan Recommendation(s): Legacy recommends residential infill development at higher densities, where appropriate, to make such development attractive to developers. Infill development makes use of land that already has a full complement of services and infrastructure and removes pressure for development on the rural fringe. Infill development should be done in such a way that it is an asset to existing surrounding neighborhoods.

Area Plan/Development Guide: Polo-Reynolda Area Plan (1985), also located within the North Suburban Small Area Plan area (Please note that the North Suburban Area Plan has not been adopted – all land use recommendations are preliminary at this time.)

Relevant Development Guide Recommendation(s): The Polo-Reynolda Area Plan recommends that the subject property be developed for low-density (0-5 units/acre) residential uses.

WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools have estimated this project, when completed, will add a total of 84 students to the system, as indicated by the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Number Units</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Projected Students from Project</th>
<th>2004-2005 Enrolled Students</th>
<th>2004-2005 Projected Students with Accumulated Totals since 4/15/04</th>
<th>School Capacity</th>
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<td>W-2719</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Old Town ES</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>584</td>
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<td>Hanes MS</td>
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<td>657</td>
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<td>North Forsyth HS</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>2013</td>
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</table>
ANALYSIS

The current request is a Site Plan Amendment for a 19.14 acre tract which is currently zoned RS-9-S (Residential Building, Single Family and Planned Residential Development). The heavily wooded site is currently undeveloped with the exception of one single family house which is scheduled for removal. The site is located at the southern terminus of Murray Road and central to an existing single family residential area which is zoned RS-12.

The subject property was rezoned in September 2004 from RS-12 to RS-9-S to permit the construction of 88 single family homes in a Planned Residential Development setting (W-2719). Although the surrounding properties are zoned RS-12, Planning staff recommended approval of the initial request, along with its increased density, due to the superior design features described below.

The elements proposed on the original site plan, which staff supported, included: an excellent public street network with no dead ends and connections to four of the five adjoining stub streets; a central green bordered by public streets on all four sides; and sidewalks and street trees along one side of most of the interior streets. The site plan which was ultimately approved by City Council had two of the four linkages to the existing streets removed, therefore the subject Site Plan Amendment shows only those connections approved in the earlier case. The central green, along with the street trees and sidewalks, remained intact.

The proposed Site Plan Amendment, while maintaining the same number of residential units, proposes a significant redesign of the common area. In evaluating this request, staff would like to briefly provide some historical context for evaluating open space and then provide a comparison between what has been approved and what is now being proposed.

There are several types of open space ranging from more rural parkways or preserves to the more urban squares, forecourts or plazas. Some spaces are oriented more toward environmental or scenic considerations while some are more oriented toward active or passive recreation or a combination thereof. Open space within long standing successful neighborhoods generally received more prominent treatment than in many of our more contemporary attempts. Local examples such as Granville Park, Grace Court Park, Lockland Park and along Greenway Avenue and Runnymede Road serve as noteworthy spaces which arguably add both monetary and aesthetic value to the homes which front on them. One of the common design themes for all of these public spaces includes a significant degree of visibility along public streets. Such exposure not only enhances the visibility, access and therefore safety of such areas but enables them to be rightfully called a park rather than just “common open space”.

The approved site plan clearly celebrates the open space component. Bordered by low traffic, local streets on all four sides it serves as a unifying element for the entire neighborhood. Twenty one houses directly face onto this green thus providing extended “ownership” and natural surveillance. In addition, Pinewood Drive and the proposed Lynnway Drive, “T” into the green thus further enhancing its visibility.
Conversely, the proposed site plan relocates the open space to a topographically depressed portion of the site. In addition, by hiding this area in the back of 16 future homes, the visual and physical accessibility to the entire neighborhood is substantially diminished. Staff sees the proposed layout as providing little more than a buffer for those 16 homes and an uninviting and unsupervised area for stormwater management. If approved, it is not anticipated that this area would receive much active or passive recreational use by the future residents based upon its design.

It should be noted that the proposed plan does provide a decrease in the amount of impervious surface and a slight increase in the square footage of open space. However, staff believes that increase in quantity of open space was offset by a reduction in the overall quality of open space. The original approval was based upon the principle that increased density is mitigated by enhanced design. While the new proposal would meet the minimum UDO standards for an RS-9 PRD, the quality open space component of the original design was presented as part of the rationale for changing the zoning from RS-12 to RS-9-S. The proposed plan demonstrates little justification why lot sizes as small as 5,550 square feet can be created while all the surrounding properties must comply with the dimensional requirements of the RS-12 district. Planning staff recommends denial of the subject request.

FINDINGS

1. The proposed Site Plan Amendment pertains primarily to the design of the open space within a recently approved Planned Residential Development.

2. The originally approved plan places the open space in a topographically prominent portion of the site and makes it easily accessible to the entire neighborhood through the public street pattern.

3. The original rezoning to a higher residential density than its neighboring subdivisions was supported in part due to the provision of quality open space.

4. The open space as shown on the approved plan is highly visible and accessible thus enhancing its extended use, ownership and natural surveillance.

5. The proposed plan relocates the open space to a topographically depressed portion of the site.

6. The proposed plan relocates the open space behind 16 future homes thereby limiting its benefit to a buffer for these homes alone, as well as a stormwater management function.

7. Staff sees the proposed open space design as providing little rationale for the higher residential density supported in the original rezoning.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Zoning: DENIAL
Site Plan: Staff certifies that the site plan meets all code requirements, and recommends the following conditions:

- **PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF GRADING PERMITS**
  a. Developer shall have a storm water management study submitted for review by the Public Works Department of the City of Winston-Salem. If required, an engineered storm water management plan shall be submitted and approved by the Public Works Department.

- **PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMITS**
  a. Developer shall record a final plat in the Office of the Register of Deeds. Final Plat shall show lots, common areas, public streets and utilities.

- **PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF PLATS**
  a. All documents including covenants, restrictions, and homeowners’ association agreements shall be recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds. Final plats must show common open space declarations.
  b. Developer must build or bond public streets to City of Winston-Salem, public street standards. Additional improvements will be required by the City DOT when driveway permits are issued.

- **OTHER REQUIREMENTS**
  a. Developer may have one entrance sign. Said sign shall be a monument type with a maximum height of six (6) feet and a maximum copy area of 18 square feet.
  b. Street trees shall be of a large variety as defined in UDO Section 3-4.10.