

May 6, 2024

Mr. Larry Forester, Chairman
Lexington – Fayette County Urban Co Planning Commission
200 E. Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Re: Rezoning for 226, 228, 232 West Maxwell Street

Dear Chairman Forester,

I represent Parsons Green Limited, and we have filed an application for zone change and an associated preliminary subdivision plan for the subject property located at 226 – 232 W. Maxwell Street in Lexington, Kentucky. The site is currently a surface parking lot, comprised of 3 parcels totaling 0.52 acres. The property is bounded by the rights-of-way of S. Mill Street, West Maxwell Street, and Lawrence Street. The site is located within the South Hill Historic District, a neighborhood of early residential homes adjacent to downtown that has been designated as an H-1 Overlay District.

Goals and Objectives

We are proposing a down-zoning from Business (B-1) to Residential (R-4), enabling the owner to consolidate and sub-divide the site as (3) through-lots for individual residences fronting on S. Mill Street and garages fronting on Lawrence Street.

We believe that the proposed development is in agreement with the 2023 Imagine Lexington 2045 Comprehensive Plan, specifically Theme A, Goal #2 – support infill and redevelopment, as the proposed residences will be constructed on a site that is currently a surface parking lot.

Engagement

The owner, and we as their representative, have engaged with the Historic South Hill Neighborhood Association, presenting the proposed site plan, building plans and elevations, and the proposed zone change from Business (B-1) to Residential (R-4). As this project site is within the Historic H-1 Overlay, the neighbors present at the Neighborhood Association meeting were very appreciative of the proposed through-lot parcels with single family residences fronting on South Mill Street and garages along Lawrence Street. The neighbors were complimentary that the proposed structures were successful in transitioning the large scale of the historic City School building (Dudley Square) to the smaller historic residences on Mill and Maxwell Streets.

We have also engaged the Lexington Historic Preservation office and presented the project to their Board of Architectural Review on April 17, 2024. Their response was positive, as we showed the history of structures on the proposed site had been oriented to front on South Mill Street, consistent with most of the remaining structures along that street. We are currently working on the

development of the project, modifying the elevations and details in response to the questions, comments, and concerns of the Board. We will return to the Board of Architectural Review in June to share the advancement of the project and request a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Site Description

The subject site is located within the South Hill neighborhood which was designated a Historic District in 1972. The residential neighborhood was once considered the outskirts of Lexington, but now is in the heart of the city between downtown and the University of Kentucky campus. Originally established in the late 1700's and developed over the next century, South Hill is mainly residential. The recent past has seen some structures and homes converted to businesses and very recently new large-scale development for mixed-use commercial and residential.

Place-Type, Development Type & Requested Zone

In 2023, Lexington, KY published their comprehensive plan titled “*Imagine Lexington: 2045 Comprehensive Plan*” with a portion of the plan titled “*Placebuilder*”, which is a compilation of planning best practices that distill the policies of the overall comprehensive plan.

Placebuilder defines seven place-types within the Urban Service Area boundary. This subject site for this proposal is a 2nd Tier Urban place-type, which is defined as:

Where significant infill and redevelopment opportunities exist to complement the urban core. While not expected to be as intensely developed as the downtown core, high-rise opportunities are not precluded provided that they are context-sensitive. The forward trend for development in the 2nd Tier urban areas should be towards increased walkability and intensity (p. 268).

However, due to the subject property being within an H-1 Historic Overlay, the Planning Department has recommended Low Density Residential.

The subject site is currently zoned B-1 Business. The applicant is proposing to down-zone / re-zone to R-4 Medium Density Residential which allows for detached single-family dwellings as proposed. Redevelopment of this site with infill construction of three (3) single-family dwellings with potential for three (3) accessory dwelling units at the garages is adding density in a manner that is supported by the Comprehensive Plan.

The applicant understands the vision of the city as outlined in *Imagine Lexington 2023*, as well as the immediate community of the South Hill neighborhood. We believe that the proposed development will achieve many of the priorities per *Placebuilder*, including creation of residential, improving walkability and the experience of the pedestrian, minimizing parking, and relating to surrounding historic context.

Development Criteria

To further address the *Placebuilder* development criteria, the design team has prepared an annotative graphic of the proposed development plan.

The following design standards are being met by the proposed development:

Land Use

A-DN2-1 C-LI7-1
C-LI6-1 D-PL7-1

Transportation Connectivity & Walkability

A-DS5-2

Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency

B-PR7-1 B-SU4-1
B-PR9-1 B-SU11-1
B-PR10-1

Site Design

C-LI8-1

Building Form

A-DS5-3

Additionally, the proposed development supports the following Pillars as listed in *Imagine Lexington: 2045 Comprehensive Plan*:

In accordance with Pillar I: Design Policy #4, through engagement with the Historic South Hill Neighborhood Association and Historic Preservation, the proposed development of single-family residential at a scale and rhythm that is appropriate for the neighborhood.

In accordance with Pillar II: Density Policy #2, the proposed development of infill residential is increasing density while enhancing the existing neighborhood through context sensitive design.

Based upon Density Policy #1 (page 70), the subject property is not located along a major corridor; therefore, several of the development criteria are not applicable.

In addition, the following information supports our assertion that the proposed zone change is in agreement with *Imagine Lexington: 2045 Comprehensive Plan*.

Land Use	
E-GR9-1	The proposed development will entail a two-story garage structure for each of the properties along the Lawrence Street frontage. Each of these garages can be an optional Accessory Dwelling Unit or office space creating a Live/Work option for each property owner.

Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency	
B-RE1-1	The applicant intends to improve the tree canopy with plantings in the front yard (South Mill frontage) and rear (Lawrence Street frontage). As the plan of the development progresses, the design team will identify trees and landscaping as well as open space.
D-SP10-1	The applicant intends for new street trees to be planted along Maxwell Street to improve the streetscape and pedestrian experience and will work with the city in order to do so.

Site Design	
C-LI8-1	The proposed development as infill housing in place of a surface parking lot is fitting for the context of the Historic South Hill neighborhood and will enhance the public realm with setbacks that relate to the existing fabric.

Conclusion

We ask that you favorably consider the proposed zone change and its relationship to fulfilling the mission, goals, objectives of *Imagine Lexington: 2045 Comprehensive Plan*. The applicant’s proposal to create new residences on the site of an existing surface parking lot and make a significant improvement to the Historic South Hill Neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration of our proposed zone change and we look forward to presenting our case in full at the public hearing in June. We are happy to answer any questions or to provide additional information about our proposal between now and the public hearing.

Sincerely,



Bob Carbon
Design Manager
New Republic Architecture