



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

May 16, 2013

REQUEST: Major Subdivision Final Plans/ 3701 Fords Lane

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Eric Tiso

PETITIONER: Steelhouse, LLC

OWNER: Steelhouse, LLC, c/o Kimberly L. Wagner

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: 3701 Fords Lane is located on the northeastern corner of the intersection with Fieldcrest Road, and is currently improved with a two-story brick apartment building that recently suffered fire damage. The site contains 1.565± acres, is zoned R-5 residential, and has several trees of significant size, especially on the eastern edge of the property.

General Area: This site is located in the Glen community, between the corridors of Reisterstown Road and Park Heights Avenue. The immediate area is residential in character, with a mix of duplex homes, apartment buildings and multi-story senior apartment buildings.

HISTORY

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposed residential development would add 24 new townhomes that will increase Baltimore's housing stock. This would help to meet the Comprehensive Master Plan's LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods, Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for all Residents. It will also aid achievement of the Mayor's goal of adding 10,000 families to Baltimore.

ANALYSIS

Project: The applicant proposes to demolish the existing apartment building and redevelop the site with 24 townhomes in three groups, provide 36 parking spaces, and a community "tot lot" amenity. Two of the proposed units facing Fords Lane will be ADA accessible.

In consideration of this request, staff has reviewed the following:

- Site Plan: The Site Plan Review Committee has reviewed and approved the site plan for this project. A turn-around is provided between the northern two groups of townhomes to satisfy Fire Department access requirements. A community “tot lot” will be provided adjacent to the turn-around.
- Landscaping: The project triggers Forest Conservation requirements, and a Forest Conservation Plan has been accepted by staff. The site has a number of significant trees, and the applicants have worked with staff to preserve as many of these trees as possible.
- Elevations: Architectural elevations have been submitted and approved for this project. The front elevations of the homes will have a cultured stone water-table base, vinyl siding above, and vinyl shakes above the second story level, and the roof will have asphalt shingles. Options will be offered for a simple portico (covered entry), bay windows with portico, or a larger front porch. Porticos and porches will have standing-seam metal roofs. Rear elevations will have options for a simple gable, a larger gable with shakes (as on the front), bay windows, and dormer windows on the roof.
- Subdivision Regulations: This project complies with Baltimore City’s Subdivision Regulations. Staff has received comments on the preliminary plans by all relevant agencies, and Final Plans have been submitted that address those comments.
- Zoning Code: The new lots will all be addressed to Fords Lane, and a parking area will be located in an easement area in the center of the development, with homes facing this easement area. The technical requirement for frontage on a public or private way is satisfied for the northern two groups of townhomes by a private way along the northern boundary of the property. Though the homes will face the easement area on the opposite side, this placement of homes is permitted by §3-302 of the Zoning Code. In an earlier concept the easement area was proposed as a private street, but this increased the degree of variances needed since the parcels would be smaller in size, and the yard areas would also be smaller by dedication of a new private way. The proposed design reduces variances required, and will look identical to the earlier concept once they are built. For that reason, staff supports this present design. The required variances for certain setbacks and/or lot areas on some of the lots have been approved by the BMZA in case #2012-502.

The following community organizations have been notified of this requested action: CHAI-Comprehensive Housing Assistance., Inc., The Development Corporation of Northwest Baltimore, the Garrison Restorative Action and Community Empowerment Association, the Har Sinai House Tenants Association, the Northwest Community Action Center, and the Northwestern District Police-Community Relations Council.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director