



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

June 6, 2013

REQUEST: Multiple Principal Structures on a Residential Lot/ Sinai Ridge Apartments – 4704-4718 Greenspring Avenue

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Martin French

PETITIONER:

OWNER: Sinai Ridge LLC

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: 4704-4718 Greenspring Avenue is located on the west side of the street across from the KIPP Ujima Academy (formerly Greenspring Junior High School/ Middle School), halfway between Cold Spring Lane and Cylburn Avenue. This property contains approximately 3.21 acres and is improved with two separate three-story garden apartment buildings, one constructed in 1959 containing 30 dwelling units and a second constructed in 1960 containing 21 dwelling units. The property currently has 51 dwelling units in two structures, and this proposal is to add a third structure that would contain 24 dwelling units. The new structure would occupy a portion of the grassy vacant northwestern corner of the property, near to the intersection of Nurton Street and Woodland Avenue.

General Area: This property is at the eastern edge of the Park Heights Urban Renewal Area, at the eastern end of a residential neighborhood comprised of a mix of single-family detached homes and single-family attached homes. The opposite side of Greenspring Avenue is largely defined by the residential mixed-use development known as Coldspring New Town.

HISTORY

The Park Heights Urban Renewal Plan now applicable to this property was approved by the Planning Commission on September 11, 2008, and approved by the Mayor and City Council by Ordinance no. 08-158 dated December 11, 2008. The ordinance also repealed the previous Park Heights Urban Renewal Plan dating from 1975, which had covered this property.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

Planning staff, having reviewed the proposed development for consistency with the Park Heights Urban Renewal Plan, find that this additional multiple-family structure would be consistent with the Plan.

The proposed action is consistent with the City of Baltimore's Comprehensive Master Plan, LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, Live Goal 1: Build human and social capital by strengthening neighborhoods, Objective 1: Expand housing choices for all residents – ensure that at least 300 more housing units per year are affordable to seniors, disabled, low- and fixed-income households; and with objectives of the Park Heights Urban Renewal Plan, including its objective to provide a variety of modern, urban housing products for diverse economic groups. The owner intends to construct the 24 additional dwelling units as privately-financed rental units affordable to moderate-income working households.

ANALYSIS

The proposed action is required by the Zoning Code, which states:

“No more than one principal detached structure may be located on: (i) any residential lot ... (§3-301.a). Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the Zoning Administrator must approve construction of more than one principal detached structure or other free-standing structure on a residential lot ... if, in a specific case: (1) the development otherwise would conform to the requirements of this article; and (2) the Planning Commission approves the design of the development” (§3-301.b).

In this case, more than one structure is already on this site, and the proposed development would result in three principal structures on the residential lot. The third structure, as proposed, would contain eight apartments per floor on three levels, in a garden-apartment structure similar to the two existing structures.

The Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals on March 26, 2013 granted three variances necessary for location of the proposed third structure:

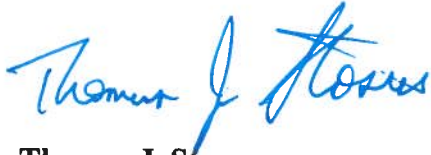
- a reduction of street-corner side yard setback to 10' in lieu of 20' to allow placement of the new building where it would not reduce the number or accessibility of parking spaces on site;
- a reduction of the lot area needed from the 186,250 sq. ft. required for 75 dwelling units to 139,828 sq. ft. (the existing lot area of the property);
- a reduction of off-street parking from 75 spaces needed to service the existing and proposed units to the existing 54 spaces now on the property.

This BMZA approval was conditional upon Planning Commission approval of multiple structures on a residential lot, and construction of all improvements, including landscaping, in accordance with the plans approved by the Site Plan Review Committee.

The Site Plan Review Committee had given final approval to the site plan on February 14, 2013, subject to Planning Commission approval of multiple structures on the residential lot.

Like the two principal structures already on this property, the proposed structure would be a three-level walk-up garden apartment building. Elevations showing a mixture of brick and cementitious fiberboard exterior cladding for the proposed third building were reviewed and determined acceptable by Planning staff. Approval of this design of the additional principal structure on this residential lot would thus be an accommodation furthering the Urban Renewal Plan objective to provide a variety of modern, urban housing products for diverse economic groups.

Staff notified the Cold Spring Community Association and Park Heights Renaissance, Inc., of this action.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director