



Note: Staff reports can be accessed at www.mncppc.org/pgco/planning/plan.htm.

Departure from Design Standards

DDS-598

Application	General Data	
Project Name: Inglewood Business Park, Largo Fairfield Inn Hotel Location: Southwest of the intersection of Lottsford Court and Lottsford Road. Applicant/Address: The Brittnelle Development Group, LLC 4906 Forest Creek Court Bowie, MD 20720	Planning Board Hearing Date:	06/10/10
	Staff Report Date:	05/27/10
	Date Accepted:	03/31/10
	Planning Board Action Limit:	N/A
	Plan Acreage:	3.58
	Zone:	I-3
	Dwelling Units:	N/A
	Gross Floor Area:	55,238 sq. ft.
	Planning Area:	73
	Tier:	Developing
	Council District:	06
	Election District	13
	Municipality:	N/A
	200-Scale Base Map:	202NE08

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates	
Departure from design standards to allow a standard, nonparallel parking space size of 9 feet by 18 feet.	Informational Mailing:	10/06/09
	Acceptance Mailing:	03/30/10
	Sign Posting Deadline:	05/11/10

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Jill Kosack	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
X			

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT:

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Steve Adams, Urban Design Supervisor

FROM: Jill Kosack, Senior Planner, Urban Design Section

SUBJECT: **Departure from Design Standards DDS-598**

REQUEST: **Departure from Design Standards to allow a standard, nonparallel parking space size of 9 feet in width by 18 feet in length.**

Departure from Section 27-558(a), Parking Space Sizes, of the Zoning Ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVAL**

NOTE:

The Planning Board has scheduled this application for a public hearing on the agenda date of June 10, 2010. The Planning Board also encourages all interested persons to request to become a person of record for this application.

Requests to become a person of record should be made in writing and addressed to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Development Review Division, 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772. Please call 301-952-3530 for additional information.

FINDINGS:

1. **Request:** The applicant has requested a departure from Section 27-558(a) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow a reduced standard, nonparallel parking space size of 9 feet in width by 18 feet in length to be used for all of the provided parking spaces. Companion to this request for a departure from design standards are Detailed Site Plan DSP-09021, Variance Request VD-09021, and Alternative Compliance AC-10011.

2. **Development Data Summary**

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	I-3	I-3
Use(s)	Vacant	Hotel with 120 rooms
Acreage	3.58	3.58
Area within 100 year floodplain	1.37	1.37
Parcels	1	1
Square Footage/GFA	0	55,328

	REQUIRED	PROPOSED
Parking		
Hotel with 120 Rooms	60	91 (4 Handicapped)
Total	60	91 (4 Handicapped)

3. **Location:** Lot 51, Inglewood Restaurant Park, is located within the 2004 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Morgan Boulevard and Largo Town Center Metro Areas*, on the south side of Lottsford Court, approximately 600 feet southwest of its intersection with Lottsford Road.
4. **Design Features:** Lot 51 is proposed to be developed with a four-story, 120-room hotel and an associated 91-space parking lot. The subject property is irregularly shaped and about one-third of its area, along the southern and western property lines, is located in a platted conservation and floodplain easement. This lot is within the existing, developed Inglewood Restaurant Park, which has a unique design including shared access drives bisected by common property lines. The front of the hotel is proposed to be oriented towards the rear of the vacant Lot 52 and Lottsford Road beyond it. A parking field, including four handicapped spaces, is located in the front of the hotel along with the porte cochere entrance area to the hotel. The remaining parking is provided to the rear of the hotel and will be accessed from the parking compound of the Jasper's Restaurant on Lot 50, which is immediately contiguous to the north and northwest. There is an existing cross access easement for the restaurant park which will allow access to these parking spaces. A detailed discussion of the other site design features, such as architecture and signage, is provided in the analysis of the companion Detailed Site Plan, DSP-09021.

5. **Departure from Design Standards from Section 27-558(a) of the Zoning Ordinance:** Section 27-558(a) of the Zoning Ordinance sets forth the following requirement:

The size of parking spaces shall be as follows:

TYPE OF SPACE	MINIMUM SIZE (IN FEET)
Standard car spaces:	
Parallel	22 by 8
Nonparallel	19 by 9 1/2
Compact car spaces:	
Parallel	19 by 7
Nonparallel	16-1/2 by 8

Departure from Design Standards DDS-598 is a request to allow a reduced standard, nonparallel parking space size of 9 feet in width by 18 feet in length to be used for all of the provided parking spaces. The applicant has provided the following general explanation of this request:

“The applicant proposes that all of the parking spaces being provided on site be dimensioned at 9-feet by 18-feet instead of 9.5-feet by 19-feet as traditionally required for standard parking spaces by the Zoning Ordinance. The size being proposed by the applicant is becoming the new universal standard gaining acceptance nationwide and supported by the Urban Land Institute.”

Section 27-239.01(b)(7) sets forth the required findings for a departure from design standards as follows:

(A) In order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:

(i) The purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant’s proposal;

Applicant’s Justification: The applicant provided the following summarized justification in response to this requirement:

“The applicant is providing more than a sufficient number of parking spaces to accommodate the need for parking. The departure being requested has no impact on whether or not the applicant has provided a sufficient number of parking spaces. From a design perspective, the applicant submits that parking spaces which are 9-feet by 18-feet are more than sufficient to allow patrons and invitees to safely park and exit their cars. It should be noted that other jurisdictions, including Charles County and Anne Arundel County, provide in their respective zoning ordinances for parking spaces similar in size to those being requested by the applicant. The Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance actually allows for a standard size parking space that is smaller at 8.5-feet by 18-feet.

“The hotel use is specifically permitted in the I-3 Zone within an employment park of this size. The site will provide adequate public facilities through the provision of stormwater management and water and sewer facilities. Since the property is the subject of a recorded final plat, transportation facilities have already been found to be adequate. The property has a very unique shape, and therefore, care has been exercised to sensitively arrange the use on the land. Significant open space is being proposed in order to protect the sensitive environmental features.”

Comment: Staff concurs with the applicant’s assertion that the purposes of Subtitle 27 will be equally well or better served by the applicant’s proposal. Specifically, the reduced parking space size has allowed for more than the required number of parking spaces to be provided on-site which provides a more comfortable amount of parking for the site’s users without overcrowding the land, while also providing a large amount of open space and allowing for the preservation of the environmentally sensitive areas. Therefore, staff concurs with the applicant’s assertion that the purposes of Subtitle 27 will be equally well or better served by the applicant’s proposal.

(ii) The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request;

Applicant’s Justification: The applicant provided the following summarized justification in response to this requirement:

“This departure request relates only to the size of the parking spaces. It is the applicant’s belief that the dimensions of the spaces it is proposing uniquely meet the needs of its business in today’s marketplace. The departure is in fact the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.”

Comment: Staff concurs with the applicant’s assertion that the request is the minimum necessary. The reduction is for one half-foot in width and one foot in length, which provides a parking space substantially larger than allowed compact spaces.

(iii) The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are unique to the site or prevalent in areas of the County developed prior to November 29, 1949;

Applicant’s Justification: The applicant provided the following summarized justification in response to this requirement:

“The property’s shape is incredibly unique thus virtually dictating the siting of the hotel on the property. Also, the impact of the environmental features severely limits the amount of the site which can be developed, thus limiting the land area available for parking spaces.”

Comment: Staff concurs with the applicant’s assertion that the property’s shape is unique, and the amount of environmental features reduces the buildable lot area to just over two acres.

- (iv) **The departure will not impair the visual, functional, or environmental quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood.**

Applicant's Justification: The applicant provided the following summarized justification in response to this requirement:

“Since most motor vehicles are smaller than in prior years, and given the fact that surrounding jurisdictions have provided for a smaller dimensional standard for parking spaces, the applicant suggests that allowing its parking spaces to be dimensioned as requested, will in no way impair the function of the parking compound for the site in general.”

Comment: Staff agrees that a reduction in parking space size will not impair the visual, functional, or environmental quality or integrity of the site or surrounding neighborhood. In fact, it will allow for the applicant to achieve additional parking spaces on its property in order not to overflow onto adjacent parking lots. The provided parking is divided between the front and rear of the building, which provides for visual relief from a large expanse of asphalt that may have resulted from the additional parking. Additionally, the reduction in parking space size allows for the additional parking spaces, while incurring no impact to the site's environmental features. It should be noted that other lots within the Inglewood Restaurant Park already provide some 9-foot by 18-foot compact parking spaces, so the reduced-size spaces on this lot would blend into what is existing within the restaurant park.

6. **Referral Agencies and Departments:**

Community Planning Division—The Community Planning North Division has no comment on this issue.

Transportation Planning Section—In a referral dated April 18, 2010, the Transportation Planning Section provided an analysis of the departure as follows.

The overall application includes Departure from Design Standards DDS-598. The departure would allow for a modification of the parking space sizes within the site. Section 27-558(a) of the Zoning Ordinance requires a standard parking space to be 9.5 feet in width and 19 feet in length. The applicant requests that dimensions of 9 feet and 18 feet be allowed. While a review of the information in the justification statement has not indicated that any statements are made in error, it should be noted that much of the rationale for reducing parking space size for this particular circumstance could apply in many other places within the county. More importantly, the rationale could easily apply within a number of transit district overlay zones or sector plans, but a brief review of development standards contained in recent sector plans has not produced an indication that the standard governing the size of the standard parking space has been reduced. This would seem to be in direct conflict with the statement that a 9-foot by 18-foot parking space has become a new “universal” standard.

The Transportation Planning Section is not well-versed in interpreting departure findings from a legal standpoint, and cannot provide a definitive statement of whether the applicant has met the burden of proof in requesting the departure. Nonetheless, it has been observed that the parking requirement for a hotel, per Subtitle 27, seems unreasonably low, and this applicant is providing 49 parking spaces more than the requirement. It would seem that allowing a small departure in

the size of the parking space would be superior to losing more than three or four parking spaces on the overall site.

Comment: Staff agrees that the parking requirement of one space per two hotel rooms, per Section 27-568, seems low and that additional parking spaces would be of benefit to prevent overflow parking in the adjacent restaurant's parking lot.

Subdivision Review Section—The Subdivision Section has no comment on this issue.

Trails—At the time of the writing of the staff report, comments from Trails have not been received.

Permit Review Section—The Permit Review Section's only discussion of this issue was to state that all standard parking spaces should be 9.5 feet by 19 feet instead of 9 feet by 18 feet, as shown on the plans.

Environmental Planning Section—The Environmental Planning Section has no comment on this issue.

Fire/EMS Department—At the time of the writing of the staff report, comments from the Fire/EMS Department have not been received.

Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T)—In a referral dated April 20, 2010, DPW&T stated that they have no objection to the departure from design standards.

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)—At the time of the writing of the staff report, comments from WSSC have not been received.

Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO)—At the time of the writing of the staff report, comments from PEPCO have not been received.

RECOMMENDATION

The Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the proposed findings and APPROVE Departure from Design Standards DDS-598 from Section 27-558(a), Parking Space Sizes, of the Zoning Ordinance for Inglewood Business Park, Largo Fairfield Inn Hotel.