

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Prior Approvals**

Preliminary Plan 1-03082 was approved by the Planning Board concurrently with the original Site Plan 8-03032. The amendment under review proposes a decrease in FAR density from the previous approval.

**ANALYSIS: Development Standards**

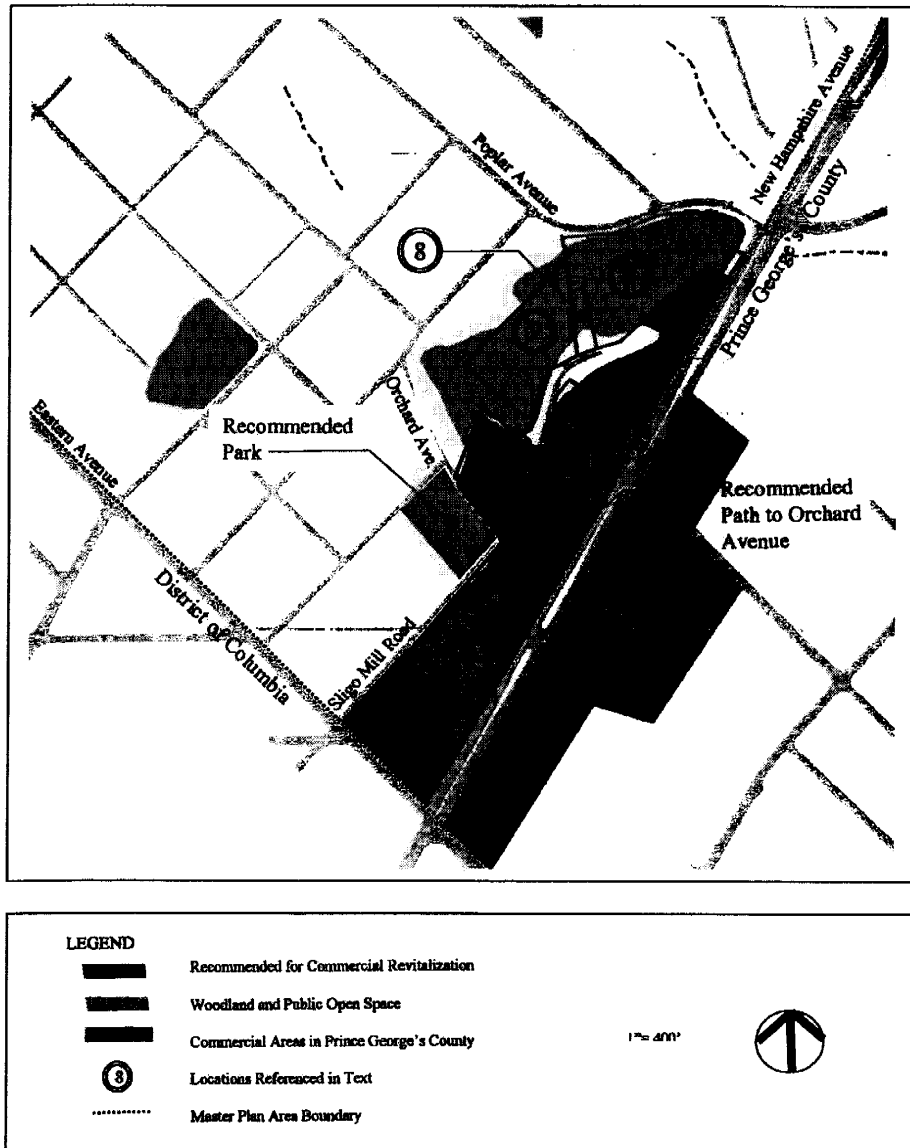
<b>Project Name</b>		<b><u>Orchard Avenue Office</u></b>	
<b>Site Plan 8-03032</b>		<b>C-2 and CROZ Zone</b>	
<i>Site Plan review required in the CROZ for Takoma Park [59-C-18.213c]</i>			
<b>PROJECT DATA TABLE</b>			
<b><u>Development Standard</u></b>	<b><u>C-2 Zone</u></b>	<b><u>CROZ</u></b>	<b><u>Proposed</u></b>
<b><u>Lot Area</u></b>			
Gross Lot Area (ac)	N/A	N/A	0.12 acres (5,251 sf)
Public Dedications			0.01 acres ( 756 sf)
Net Lot Area	N/A	N/A	0.10 acres (4,495 sf)
<b><u>Density</u></b>			
Building Area (office use)	N/A	N/A	5,595 sf
<b><u>Floor Area Ratio</u></b>	1.50 FAR		0.64 FAR
FAR Space (above ground)			3,730 sf
Non-FAR Space (cellar)			1,865 sf
<b><u>Green Area</u></b>			
Green Space %	10% (525 sf)		23% (1,200 sf)
Impervious Area	N/A	N/A	76% (3,989 sf)
Building Height	42 feet min	30 feet <sup>1</sup>	36 feet
<b><u>Building Setbacks (If)</u></b>			
Front street	10 feet		10 feet
Side (adjacent to RT-8)	10 feet		10 feet
Side (adjacent to C-2)	0 feet		23 feet (approx)
Rear	0 feet		0 feet
<b><u>Parking</u></b>			
Standard - general office	14 spaces		8 spaces <sup>2</sup>
<p>1. §59-C-18.213(c) The Planning Board may allow additional building height up to 42 feet in commercial development if the Board finds that the buildings are compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with the intent of the master plan.</p> <p>2. §59-C-18.213 The Planning Board may waive the requirement for number of parking spaces if such waiver will accomplish the goals of the master plan.</p>			

**ANALYSIS: Conformance to Master Plan**

A major theme of the Takoma Park Master Plan (2000) is the revitalization of commercial centers, including improvements in this area of the Maryland Gateway Eastern and New Hampshire Avenues Center. To support revitalization, the Plan recommended and the County Council adopted a new Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone, whose purpose is to:

- Foster economic vitality and attractive community character in areas needing revitalization;
- Promote an enhanced pedestrian environment and an improved circulation system to pedestrians and bicycles as well as motor vehicles;
- Ensure consistency with the master plan vision for specific existing commercial areas; and
- Provide for the combination of residential with commercial uses.

The proposed site plan (for Site #10) will provide significant improvements to the site by replacing an unsightly parking area with a modern, small-scale office building. The project will create an attractive edge and a land use transition between the Pinecrest residential area and the Maryland Gateway Center. The project will also provide economic development for the City of Takoma Park. [See also *Memorandum* from Community Based Planning, attached.]



**FINDINGS: For Site Plan Review § 59-D-3.4**

1. *The Site Plan is consistent with an approved development plan or a project plan for the optional method of development if required.*

Not applicable.

2. *The Site Plan meets all of the requirements of the zone in which it is located.*

See *Project Data Table*, page 10.

3. *The location of the building and structures, the open spaces, the landscaping, recreation facilities, and the pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems are adequate, safe and efficient.*

- a. Buildings

The building location is adequate, safe and maximally efficient. [See *Proposal Description*, page 8.] The building is well sited to utilize the natural topography to greatest advantage and to provide safe and efficient access to vehicles and pedestrians. The building design offers its future occupants significant flexibility for a variety of architectural programs.

- b. Open Spaces

The open spaces are adequate, safe and efficient. The street frontage along Orchard Avenue is adequately landscaped with White Oak trees that offer shade for the sidewalk and will establish a visual continuity with the future parkland across the street. The small understory plantings of crab apples within the front yard will provide an attractive entry feature, supplying native plantings that are beneficial to the natural environment and species mix within the planning area.

A significant amount of open space remains at the western portion of the site where the topography slopes more steeply. Staff recommends that the area be cleared of invasive species and planted with ground cover to ensure stabilization of the slope.

- c. Landscaping and Lighting

The plan provides adequate and safe landscaping and lighting. Street trees will be planted along the inside edge of the public sidewalk. The White Oak street trees will provide a species visually compatible with the existing trees in the M-NCPPC parkland across Orchard Avenue and complementary to the future design of this neighborhood park. The front yard will feature a landscape ensemble of crab apple trees that function as bioretention planting for the stormwater filtration system. This planting arrangement complements the masonry wall that screens the parking to utilize the limited site area to maximum efficiency.

Lighting provided consists of ground lighting at the pedestrian walkways and building mounted floodlights along the facades. The lighting levels provided by the ground lighting and wall fixtures are attractive and non-intrusive.

- d. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

The vehicular traffic entrance and connection to the parking is adequate and safe. The carefully considered layout achieves the separation of conflicting uses (pedestrian/vehicular). The vehicular entrance from Orchard Avenue provides adequate turning radius while maintaining a pedestrian scale with attractive plantings along the public street frontage.

The pedestrian circulation system provides adequate safety and efficiency. As approved by the Planning Board in 2003, the proposed placement of the sidewalk at the curb allows more efficient use of the site area. The pedestrian system serving the building, with its two entrances, is thoughtfully designed to offer maximum flexibility, function, and privacy to future occupants.

4. *Each structure and use is compatible with other uses and other Site Plans and with existing and proposed adjacent development.*

The proposed design for the Orchard Avenue Office Building achieves a high level of compatibility for the uses proposed and for existing and potential development. The form and placement of the building allows extremely efficient use of all building levels. The skillful handling of the building's massing in its articulation of small cubes creates a structure, human in scale, that responds successfully to its residential surroundings. The facades, which step back from the street in sequence, accentuate the building's three dimensions, enhance the streetscape, and establish interesting and attractive views for users of the future park. The proposal fulfills the goals of the Master Plan and sets the standard for future development in this area of Takoma Park.

The activity associated with the proposed residential uses will not cause any negative effect on the surrounding residential and commercial uses.

5. *The Site Plan meets all applicable requirements of Chapter 22A regarding forest conservation.*

The site is exempt from Forest Conservation, per Exemption #4-02303, approved April 22, 2002.

**FINDINGS: For Site Plan Review § 59-C-18.215 (CROZ)**

- a. *The Site Plan is consistent with the recommendation in the applicable master or sector plan for the area.*

See *Conformance to Master Plan*, page 11.

- b. *The Site Plan meets all of the purposes and requirements of this overlay zone as well as applicable requirements of the underlying zone;*

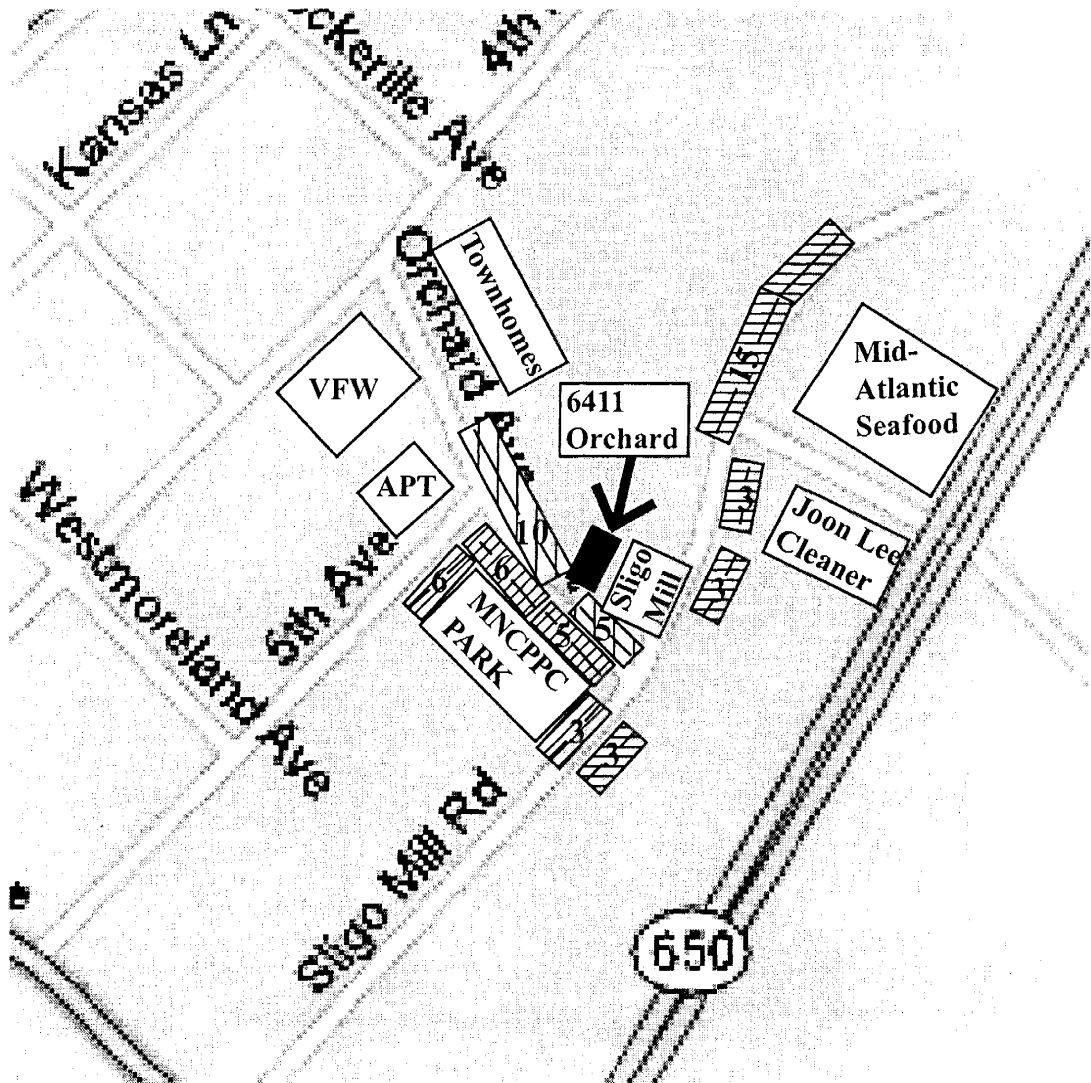
The Site Plan meets the purposes and requirements of the Commercialization and Revitalization Overlay Zone and the purposes and requirements of the C-2 Zone. The building size and functional design, in conjunction with the use proposed, will "foster economic vitality and attractive community character and ensure consistency with the master plan" in providing "continued commercial use and low-intensity residential or office space as an appropriate land use." See also *Project Data Table*, 10.

- c. *Each structure and use is compatible with other uses and other site plans and with existing and proposed adjacent development.*

See discussion on compatibility under *Findings for Site Plan #4*, on this page.

**APPENDIX**




- a. *Neighborhood Parking Supply Analysis*, dated March 15, 2003
- b. *Resolution*, City Council of the City of Takoma Park, dated March 21, 2005
- c. Letter from Pinecrest Neighborhood Association, Inc., dated March 10, 2005
- d. *Opinion of the Montgomery County Planning Board*, 8-03032, dated July 25, 2003



**Takoma Park/Orchard Avenue/Pinecrest neighborhood area.**

Informal parking space count 3-9-05 by Dan Robinson, Jim O'Brien

All parking space numbers are adjacent to park and commercial areas - none are adjacent to residential. Measured spaces are approximately 21 feet in length.

-  Spaces within 1 block of 6411 Orchard Avenue - same side of street: 15
  -  Additional spaces within 1 block with 1 street crossing: 20
  -  Additional spaces within 2 blocks with 2 street crossings: 24
- Total current legal non-residential street spaces within 2 blocks: 59

Approximate number of additional spaces within two blocks on VFW lot, Joon Lee lot, Mid-Atlantic Seafood lot, Sligo Mill building bay spaces: over 100.

Size and scale approximate.

Introduced by: Councilmember Williams

**RESOLUTION # 2005 - 21**  
**Resolution in Support of 6411 Orchard Avenue Parking Waiver**

**WHEREAS,** Mr. Dan Robinson is planning to construct a 5,500 square foot office building at 6411 Orchard Avenue; and

**WHEREAS,** Mr. Robinson's project is located within the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone (CROZ); and

**WHEREAS,** Mr. Robinson is requesting a waiver of six parking spaces; and

**WHEREAS,** the Planning Board may waive parking requirements within the CROZ if it finds that the waiver will accomplish the goals of the master plan including revitalization, enhancing the pedestrian environment, and encouraging use of transit; and

**WHEREAS,** Mr. Robinson has obtained all necessary permits from the City and worked with City and Park and Planning staff to design his building so that it will contribute to the streetscape; and


**WHEREAS,** the City of Takoma Park recognizes the importance of attractive, well-designed properties in maintaining the livability and economic health of the community; and

**WHEREAS,** the Pinecrest Community Association supports both the overall project and the proposed parking waiver.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Takoma Park supports this parking waiver request and encourages its approval by the Montgomery County Planning Board.

Adopted this 21<sup>st</sup> day of March 2005.

Attest:

  
Catherine E. Waters, CMC  
City Clerk

Pinecrest Neighborhood Association, Inc.  
6411 Eastern Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

March 10, 2005

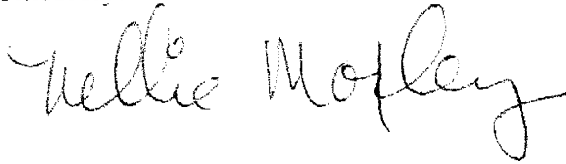
To the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission:

The Pinecrest Neighborhood Association supports the Site Plan modification for the Orchard Avenue Office building. We understand that Mr. Robinson wants to build a cellar, and needs a waiver for 6 parking spaces for the zoning and space requirements. Mr. Robinson has kept us up to date on his plans.

There is plenty of parking around where that building will be, and we agree that having the extra space downstairs is a good idea.

Please grant Mr. Robinson the parking waiver and his putting in a cellar space for office use in the building that will be on Orchard Avenue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nellie Moxley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Nellie Moxley  
President  
301-279-5134

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

OPINION

**DATE MAILED:** July 25, 2003  
**SITE PLAN REVIEW:** #8-03032  
**PROJECT:** Orchard Avenue Office

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*Action: Approval subject to conditions. Motion was made by Commissioner Wellington, seconded by Commissioner Bryant with a vote of 4-0. Commissioners Perdue, Bryant, Wellington and Robinson voting for. Commissioner Berlage was necessarily absent.*

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The date of this written opinion is July 25, 2003 (which is the date that this opinion is mailed to all parties of record). Any party authorized by law to take an administrative appeal must initiate such an appeal, as provided in the Maryland Rules of Procedure, on or before August 25, 2003 (which is thirty days from the date of this written opinion). If no administrative appeal is timely filed, this site plan shall remain valid until the expiration of the project's APFO approval, as provided in Section 59-D-3.8.

On July 24, 2003, Site Plan Review #8-03032 was brought before the Montgomery County Planning Board for a public hearing. At the public hearing, the Montgomery County Planning Board heard testimony and received evidence submitted in the record on the application. Based on the testimony and evidence presented and on the staff report which is made a part hereof, the Montgomery County Planning Board finds:

For Site Plan Review § 59-D-3.4

1. *The Site Plan is consistent with the approved development plan or a project plan for the optional method of development, if required;*
2. *The Site Plan meets all of the requirements of the zone in which it is located;*
3. *The locations of the buildings and structures, the open spaces, the landscaping, the recreation facilities, and the pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems are adequate, safe, and efficient;*
4. *Each structure and use is compatible with other uses and other site plans and with existing and proposed adjacent development;*
5. *The site plan meets all applicable requirements of Chapter 22A regarding forest conservation.*

For Site Plan Review § 59-C-18.215 (CROZ)

- a. *The Site Plan is consistent with the recommendation in the applicable master or sector plan for the area.*
- b. *The Site Plan meets all of the purposes and requirements of this overlay zone as well as applicable requirements of the underlying zone;*
- c. *Each structure and use is compatible with other uses and other site plans and with existing and proposed adjacent development.*