

APPLICATION NUMBER

5108

A REQUEST FOR

**PARKING SURFACE AND DRIVEWAY WIDTH
VARIANCES TO ALLOW AN AGGREGATE SURFACE
AND A 9' WIDE DRIVEWAY; ALL ACCESS AND
MANEUVERING AREA MUST BE ASPHALT, CONCRETE
OR AN ALTERNATIVE PARKING SURFACE AND ONE
WAY DRIVES MUST BE A MINIMUM OF 12' WIDE IN A
B-4, GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

LOCATED AT

653 & 659 SAINT FRANCIS STREET

(Southeast corner of Saint Francis Street and North Washington Avenue)

APPLICANT/OWNER

PARKER R. BUCKLEY, JR.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

APRIL 2002

The applicant is requesting Parking Surface and Driveway Width Variances to allow an aggregate parking surface and a 9' wide driveway; all access and maneuvering areas must be asphalt, concrete or an alternative parking surface and one way drives must be a minimum of 12' wide in a B-4, General Business District.

The applicant states that the site is a vacant grassed lot located within the Lower Dauphin Historic District. The proposed improvements will be a 94' x 37' crushed limestone parking facility for 659 St. Francis Street. The applicant contends that the use of crushed limestone would be more in keeping with the historic district and would allow reutilization of the property more easily than paving.

Access to the proposed parking facility is to be via an existing 9' wide paved alley between 655 and 659 St. Francis Street, and a new 12' wide drive to Washington Avenue. The Traffic Engineering Department has concerns about the access as shown on the plan submitted, and recommends that access to St. Francis be denied and that access to Washington Avenue be via a 24' two-way drive.

Based on the plan submitted, the site is large enough to accommodate the recommendations of the Traffic Engineering Department.

While there are some perceived advantages to crushed limestone parking lots (cost, aesthetics, drainage), there are also disadvantages such as the inability to delineate spaces, migration of the aggregate material, potential damage to vehicles. Also, after several years of use crushed limestone becomes "compacted", forming an impervious surface that is not beneficial for drainage.

Furthermore, there are other alternative parking surfaces allowed by the Zoning Ordinance that also meets most of the needs and desires of the applicant. These options include interlocking pavers, porous asphalt or grasscrete. Any of these surfaces could be allowed without requiring a variance, and some would probably be acceptable to the Architectural Review Board without much debate.

The Zoning Ordinance states that no variance shall be granted where economics are the basis for the application; and, unless the Board is presented with sufficient evidence to find that the variance will not be contrary to the public interest, and that special conditions exist such that a literal enforcement of the Ordinance will result in an unnecessary hardship. The Ordinance also states that a variance should not be approved unless the spirit and intent of the Ordinance is observed and substantial justice done to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood.

While the Architectural Review Board has given this project conceptual approval, they were not asked to consider any of the alternative parking surfaces allowed by the Zoning

Ordinance. Furthermore, conceptual approval by the Architectural Review Board should not be considered grounds for granting of a variance.

RECOMMENDATION 5108

Date: April 1, 2002

Based on the preceding, it is recommended that this application be denied.

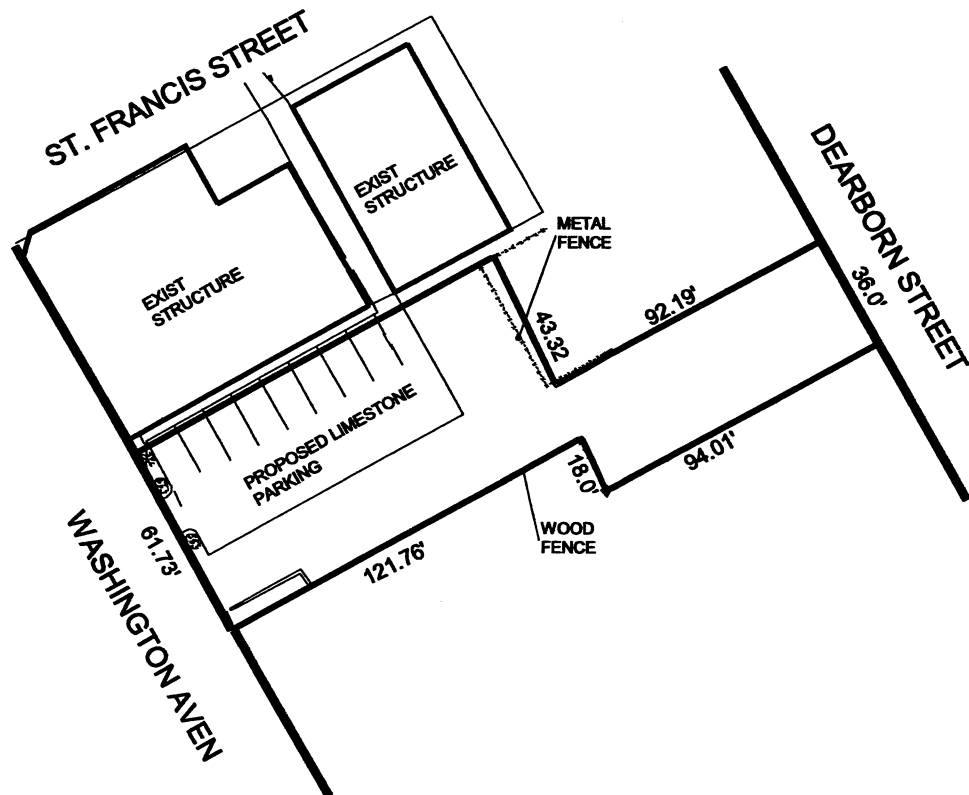
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APPLICATION NUMBER 5108 DATE April 1, 2002
 APPLICANT Parker R. Buckley, Jr.
 REQUEST Parking Surface and Driveway Width Variances



R-1 R-2 R-3 R-B H-B B-1 B-2 B-3 B-4 B-5 I-1 I-2

SITE PLAN



The site is located on the Southeast corner of St. Francis Street and N. Washington Avenue. The plan illustrates the existing structures on the adjoining property and the proposed limestone parking.

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USE/REQUEST Parking Surface and Driveway Width Variances

