

MAJOR SITE PLAN REVIEW MEMORANDUM

To: ABSECON CITY PLANNING BOARD

From: ROBERT L. REID, AICP, PP, BOARD PLANNER

Subject: COMPLETENESS REVIEW
MAJOR PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN
WITH BULK VARIANCES FOR
PROPOSED Holiday Inn Express Hotel Expansion
BLOCK 189, LOT 1
RLR Project No. : ABS 057.01

Date: May 12, 2008

BACKGROUND

The existing 49 room hotel facility with 61 parking spaces was approved in August of 1997. The approval included variances for building length, sign area and wall sign height.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing to add 37 guest rooms to the existing 49 room Hotel for a total of 86 quest rooms.

The applicant also proposes:

- In-door swimming pool / hot tub area (2,000 sq.ft.) with interior corridor entry, exterior entry, restroom and pool equipment room;
- 600 sq. ft. Gym;
- Business office / Computer room,
- Great Room;
- Vending Area;
- Meeting room (1,000 sq. ft.) with interior corridor entry, exterior entry, pantry area, restrooms and storage areas.
- A total of 97 parking spaces.

VARIANCES REQUESTED

The applicant seeks numerous bulk and area variances.

- Proposed Building Length
- Lot Coverage
- Sign Height
- Number of Signs
- Width of Buffer

SUMMARY OF APPROVALS REQUIRED

- **Absecon City** - Preliminary Site Plan
- **Absecon City** - Final Site Plan
- **NJDOT** – Highway Access
- **NJDEP** – Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA)
- **Atlantic County Utilities Authority** – Sanitary Sewer Endorsement
- **NJDEP** – Treatment Works Approval (TWA) Sanitary Sewer Extension
- **Cape-Atlantic Soil Conservation District** - Certification

DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

<u>Item/ Drawing No.</u>	<u>Item Description</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Revision</u>
	Correspondence from Duffy, Dolcy, McManus & Roesch	03/25/08	
	Land Development Application	03/12/08	
	Exhibit A 1 Review Checklist	No Date	
	Proof of Taxes Paid	03/12/08	
	Site Engineering Plans-Prepared by Duffy, Dolcy, McManus & Roesch Consisting of:		
1 of 12	Cover Sheet	01/08/08	
2 of 12	As- Built Survey	01/08/08	
3 of 12	Site Plan	01/08/08	
4 of 12	Grading & Drainage Plan	01/08/08	
5 of 12	Landscaping Plan	01/08/08	
6 of 12	Lighting Plan	01/08/08	
7 of 12	Detail Sheet 1	01/08/08	
8 of 12	Detail Sheet 2	01/08/08	
9 of 12	Detail Sheet 3	01/08/08	
10 of 12	Detail Sheet 4	01/08/08	
11 of 12	Landscaping Details	01/08/08	
12 of 12	Soil Erosion Plan	01/08/08	
	Architectural Plans Prepared by Harry S. Harper, Architect Consisting of:		
1 of 4	First Floor Plan	01/16/08	4/24/08 5/12/08
2 of 4	Second Floor Plan	01/16/08	4/24/08
3 of 4	Third Floor Plan	01/16/08	4/24/08
4 of 4	Building Elevations	01/16/08	4/24/08
	NJDEP CAFRA Compliance Statement prepared by Armbruster Environmental	08/27/07	
	Traffic Report prepared by Pennoni Associates	12/2007	

COMPLETENESS REVIEW

Attached is "Exhibit A1" - Major Site Plan Checklist (Preliminary). This application has been reviewed for completeness in accordance with the above.

The numbered items below directly correspond to items in the Preliminary Site Plan checklist (Exhibit A1):

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|-----|---|------------------|
| 2. | Provide Completed Application Form (See Note 1 below). | |
| 8. | Provide Planning Board Engineer Signature Line | |
| 14. | Provide Outbound and topographic survey. (See note 2 below) | |
| 15. | Provide Architectural Plans signed and sealed by Licensed by the State of New Jersey (See Note 3 below) | |
| 21. | Environmental Impact Statement. | Recommend Waiver |
| 23. | Block Model | Recommend waiver |
| 24. | Applicant should provide status of other approvals. | |

COMPLETENESS REVIEW NOTES

The Applicant has submitted adequate information for preliminary review of the application for development. The Applicant is required to provide additional information regarding actual number of employees needed to adequately staff the proposed hotel and the use of the meeting room proposed.

ZONING

The subject property is situate in the Highway Commercial District (HC) which permits the following commercial uses:

Retail Stores and service establishments
Fully enclosed restaurants and drinking establishments
General Business and Professional Offices
Banks
Motels
Gasoline service stations
Golf and tennis recreation uses
Hotels subject to conditions in Article XIV

SITE PLAN REVIEW

The applicant is proposing a 37 quest room expansion to the existing 49 quest room hotel.

The building also includes Meeting room (1,200 sq. ft.) with interior corridor entry, exterior entry, pantry area, restrooms and storage areas.

Site improvements include site lighting, landscaping, identification signs, stormwater management facilities, trash enclosure and 97 space paved parking lot.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

The applicant is proposing a 97 space paved parking lot. Ingress and egress is from Stewart Lane.

The detailed review of the traffic circulation is deferred to the Board Traffic Engineer.

LANDSCAPING

The applicant is proposing approximately 201 plantings consisting of 2 shade trees and 199 shrubs and ground cover plantings. The detailed review of the landscaping is deferred to the Board Landscape Architect.

LIGHTING

The applicant is proposing 15 pole mounted lighting fixtures and 6 wall mounted light fixtures. The detailed review of the lighting is deferred to the Board Engineer.

VARIANCE REVIEW

The applicant is requesting that the Board grant numerous bulk and area variances

The following variances are requested by the applicant:

Site Coverage

Section 224-69 O permits a maximum of 65% site coverage. The applicant is proposing 73%. The subject property is location in NJ State Metropolitan Planning Area which allows a maximum of 80% site coverage. This permitted site coverage is to encourage higher intensity development in less environmentally sensitive areas. Other areas in Absecon are only permitted 5% and 30% based on the level of environmental sensitivity. The NJDEP will review the Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA) permit application for this development project which will approve the proposed 73% site coverage. The applicant should provide testimony by a qualified professional to justify the site coverage variance.

Building Length:

Section 224-84 A (9) permits 100' maximum building length. The building as proposed is approximately 189.25' X 136.25'. The Planning Board has granted building length variances in the past taking in consideration building façade offset being proposed to break-up the building length. The applicant is proposing two separate three story buildings with a one story enclosed pool / spa area as the building connection. The applicant should provide testimony by a qualified professional to justify the building length variance.

Buffer Strip

Section 224-71 A (2) requires a minimum 8' wide buffer strip. The applicant is proposing a 5.7' buffer strip along the southeasterly property line. This side of the subject property adjoins NJDOT property which consists of open space and a jug-handle. The applicant is proposing landscaping in the adjoining NJDOT property to mitigate undersize buffer proposed on the subject property. The applicant should obtain authorization from the NJDOT to allow them to install landscaping on NJDOT property. The applicant should provide testimony by a qualified professional to justify the buffer variance.

Sign Height, Number of Signs, Size of Signs

The following is in accordance with the Absecon Developmental Ordinance:

Schedule A - "Permitted Signs by Sign Type" permits freestanding signs and wall signs.

Schedule B - "Maximum Total Sign Area Per Lot" permits 110 sq. ft. sign area per lot. In the case of the corner lot, 220 sq. ft. maximum sign area is permitted.

Schedule C - "Number and Dimensions of Permitted Signs" permits two wall signs per building maximum 12' high and one pole sign per lot maximum 25' high.

The applicant was previously granted a sign area variance for 357 sq. ft. The applicant is now requesting a variance to allow for 3 wall mounted signs with 339 sq. ft. in total sign area.

The applicant was previously granted a variance to allow for a height of 37'. The applicant now proposes a wall sign height of 41'.

The applicant should provide testimony by a qualified professional to justify the variance for the number of signs and the sign height proposed.

In addition to the variances requested by the applicant, a parking variance may also be required.

Parking

Section 224-128 B (2) requires one parking space for each rental room, plus one for each employee, plus 5%.

Section 224-128 B (4) requires one space for each 3 seats for public or private assembly.

The applicant is proposing a 86 room hotel and a 1,000 sq. ft. meeting area.

The applicant has provided the anticipated number of 6 employees. This appears low considering the size of the hotel with the amenities proposed. The applicant proposes meeting area without providing the seating to determine the parking requirements.

The following is an estimate of parking required based on the following assumptions:

Assume 12 employees at a peak shift based on the following: Six room attendants, one manager, one front desk clerk, one breakfast room attendant, one pool / hot tub / gym attendant, one meeting room attendant and one general maintenance employee.

Anticipated parking required for hotel: 86 plus 12 employees = 98

The project architect estimates the seating capacity can be calculated at 20 sq. ft. / seat. If we assume 20 sq. ft. per person the seating capacity is 50 seats (1,000 sq. ft. / 20 sq. ft.).

Required parking for 50 seats is one space for each 3 seats or 17 spaces.

It is estimated that the development as proposed could require 98 spaces for the hotel and 17 spaces for the meeting area for a total of 115 parking spaces, plus 5% (or an additional 6 spaces).

Total estimated parking needed for all uses at site	121 spaces
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Parking provided	97 spaces
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It appears that a parking variance is required. It is understood that on occasion the occupants of the hotel may use the meeting area. However, the meeting area floor plan layout includes a separate entrance hall from the parking area leading to the meeting room. A separate entry foyer, great room and public restrooms are also provided for the meeting area. This design will allow for the use of the facility for events not associated with the hotel use.

The applicant should provide the number of anticipated employees during the peak shift, a seating layout for the meeting area and a detailed description as to how the meeting area will be used to confirm the actual parking need. The applicant has stated that the guests will utilize the meeting room the majority of the time. The meeting room will only be used for events not associated with the hotel guests during off-peak room occupancy. The applicant should provide testimony regarding the use of the meeting room by non-guests in detail. The applicant should provide a parking analysis and testimony by a qualified professional to confirm the parking need and to justify the parking variance.

Pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law, the applicant must provide special reasons for the Planning Board to grant the requested variances, and address the negative impacts that would result should the variances be approved.

It should be noted that no variance relief pursuant to NJSA 40:55-70 may be granted unless such variance relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and will not substantially impair the intent and the purpose of the Zone Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board must balance the special reasons and positive impacts offered versus the negative impacts that will be created as the result of the proposed development.

It is suggested that the Planning Board consider the following when deliberating the relief sought to permit the proposed development.

1. The Board is not required to grant or deny the proposal as submitted. The Board may require the Applicant to modify the plan if it feels it will reduce negative impacts.
2. The site is surrounded by 2 public streets, railroad right-of-way and a NJDOT jug-handle.
3. The site is located in a State Planning Area that permits 80% site coverage.
4. Board previously granted building length, sign height and sign area variances.
5. Additional information presented regarding number of employees, the seating capacity of the meeting room, and how the applicant intends to use the meeting room.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The applicant should provide testimony by a qualified professional to justify the all variances requested.
2. The applicant should provide the number of anticipated employees at the peak shift, a seating layout for the meeting area and a detailed description as to how the meeting area will be used to confirm the actual parking need. The applicant should provide a parking analysis and testimony by a qualified professional to confirm the parking need and to justify the parking variance.
3. The applicant should provide testimony by a qualified professional to justify the variance relief requested.
4. The applicant should address all comments of the other Planning Board professionals.
5. Planning Board approval shall be contingent upon approval from other regulatory authorities having jurisdiction.
6. Additional comments and recommendations may be offered in response to additional information provided by the applicant and / or testimony being offered at the public meeting.

cc: Tina Lawler, Board Secretary
Andy Previti, PE, Board Engineer
Michael Fitzgerald, Esquire, Board Attorney
Al Litwornia, PE, Board Traffic Engineer
Joseph P. Adamson, CLA, Board Landscape Architect
.Renuka Hospitality LLC, Applicant
Thomas Roesch, PE, Applicants Engineer
Stephen Nehmad, Esq.
Harry S. Harper, Applicants Architect