



City of New Bedford

Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development

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STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE
March 30, 2018

PLANNING BOARD MEETING
April 11, 2018

Case #18-16: SPECIAL PERMIT
14 South Sixth Street
Map: 46 Lot: 256

Owner / Applicant: Trevor J. Reilly & Kate A. Reilly
14 South Sixth Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

Applicant's Agent: Ricardo Romao-Santos
1118 Acushnet Avenue
New Bedford, MA 02740

Overview

Request by applicant for a **Special Permit** for a reduction in the number of parking spaces required for two residential units and a business (recording studio), located at **14 South Sixth Street** (Map: 46 Lot: 256) on a .12± acre parcel in a Mixed Use Business [MUB] zoned district.



The applicant **proposes three (3) parking spaces** where nine (9) are required within the zoning ordinance. The applicant therefore seeks a **reduction of six (6) parking spaces**.

Existing Conditions

The project site, 14 South Sixth Street, is located in New Bedford's Downtown and contains a 6,018 SF mixed residential and commercial structure, which most recently functioned as a boarding house. The structure, with additions off the rear, is "P" shaped. The 5,227 SF lot is similarly "P" shaped with 57' of frontage on South Sixth Street, and with 84' of depth on the south side and 107' depth on the north side.

An asphalt driveway (20'x 56') is located along the south side of the lot. Some areas of wear are evident in the driveway. The lot slopes down easterly, so the lower level of the structure is accessible from the driveway. A small grassed area with a tree and shrubbery is located in the southeastern corner of the lot. A deck is located in this grass area at the rear southeast corner of the structure. Due to the slope of the land, the deck provides access to the first floor from the rear yard. Historic granite posts define the western boundary of the property, while a stone wall exists on the southerly property line; a wooden fence and shrubbery are located along the

easterly property line. A walkway with a railing is located along the northerly property line, leading to the entrance for the rear addition of the structure; which is also located along the northerly property line.

The surrounding neighborhood is a mixture of commercial, civic, and residential uses. Directly abutting this property to the north is a parking lot for Izzy's restaurant, to the south is the YWCA, and located in the rear (east) is Nativity Preparatory School. Directly across South Sixth Street (west) are professional offices located in former historic residential structures.

South Sixth Street is one-way, southbound street with metered parking on the west side of the street. Parking is not available on the east side of the street. A SRTA bus stop is located diagonally at the corner of South Sixth and Spring Street. The Zeiterion Municipal Parking Garage is two blocks east. The neighborhood has multiple private paved parking lots.

Proposed Conditions

This project before the Planning Board is for consideration of a Special Permit for a parking reduction.

The petitioner proposes converting the property into two residential units on the upper floors, and one commercial business (recording studio) serving clients on-site. The recording studio proposed would be split between the first floor and the lower level (accessible from the driveway). In total, the recording studio would comprise 942 SF of the structure. The proposed change of use within the zoning ordinance requires nine (9) parking spaces to be provided on-site. The petitioner proposes providing three (3) parking spaces on-site.

The three (3) parking spaces are proposed within the existing driveway. The parking spaces are proposed in tandem along the south side of the driveway with an 11' 5"± access aisle on the north side. One parking space is proposed as a designated handicapped parking space. A potential fourth parking space is depicted within plans submitted as a possibility in the existing grassed rear yard. The petitioner has elected to present plans including a potential fourth parking space should the Board determine that more than three parking spaces are necessary. However, the applicant has expressed a preference in having the board consider the Special Permit allow for three parking spaces.



Demand and Operations

The applicant anticipates that the recording studio business would serve 1-2 customers per day, and have one (1) employee. The proposed hours of operation for the recording studio would be from 9am-6pm, Monday through Sunday. The frequency of deliveries is noted on the application as “special occasions”.

The applicant expressed in the narrative provided that the studio customers would be served by appointment only. The applicant stated that there is not an anticipation of more than one or two vehicles at a time for the recording studio business. Furthermore, the applicant noted the business and residential demand for parking differ throughout the day. The business hours are noted on the application as being “during regular working hours, when residents of the home will be away at work.”

Review Comments

As required under city ordinance, the case submittal documents were distributed to City Clerk, City Solicitor, Health Department, Inspectional Services, Engineering, Public Infrastructure, Conservation Commission, Fire Department and School Department.

Comments from city departments were not received as of the writing of this report. Any comments received will be made available at the public meeting.

Master Plan Goal

The proposal for a Special Permit for parking reduction is consistent with the master plan’s goal to “promote a mixed-use environment in Downtown New Bedford and other commercial centers and corridors to ensure a vibrant community during the day, evening and weekends, that creates walkable village-like neighborhoods throughout the city.”¹.

The proposal maintains housing options and brings a new commercial service to the Downtown, and is within walking distance of municipal parking facilities and public transit.

Materials for Consideration

The plan submittal is shown as Reilly Residence Proposed Music Studio 14 South Sixth Street New Bedford, MA, Ownership Kate & Trevor Reilly, dated March 14, 2018. The plan was prepared by Romao Santos Architects, in New Bedford, MA and stamped by Ricardo Romao-Santos, Registered Architect. The plan consists of the following sheet:

- Sheet L.1 Area/Parking Calc’s Site/Key Plan

In addition to the foregoing submitted materials, the Planning Board may also wish to consider:

- **Waivers**
There are no waiver petitions submitted by the applicant for consideration by the Planning Board.
- **Development Impact Statement (DIS)**
The applicant has not provided a DIS for the proposed development.
- **Traffic Impact & Access Study**
The applicant has not provided a traffic analysis for the proposed development.

¹ Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc (2010). *A City Master Plan New Bedford 2020 Executive Summary*. p.S-4.

Parking and Loading Requirements

Parking Calculations

4 spaces for two residential units (2 spaces per dwelling unit)

5 spaces for the 942± SF recording studio (1 space per 200SF GFA)

4 + 5 = 9 Total spaces needed

Special Permit

Per zoning ordinance section 3120 the board may reduce any parking or loading requirement if, the Board finds that the reduction is not inconsistent with public health and safety, or that the reduction promotes a public benefit. Such cases might include:

- Use of a common parking lot for separate uses having peak demands occurring at different times;
- Age or other characteristics of occupants of the facility requiring parking which reduces auto usage;
- Peculiarities of the use which make usual measures of demand invalid;
- Availability of on-street parking or parking at nearby municipally owned facilities.
- Where a special permit is granted, a reserve area, to be maintained indefinitely as landscaped open space, may be required sufficient to accommodate the difference between the spaces otherwise required and the spaces reduced by special permit. The parking/site plan shall show (in dotted outline) how the reserve area would be laid out in to provide the otherwise required number of spaces.

The proposal has peak demands occurring at different times and is within close proximity to municipal parking facilities and public transit.

Additionally, under section 5300 of the zoning ordinance the Board must take into account the characteristics of the site and of the proposal in relation to that site, the determination shall include consideration of each of the following:

- **Social, economic, or community needs which are served by the proposal.**
The vision of the City includes the creation of dynamic downtown with a mix of residential and commercial uses. This proposal is an adaptive reuse of an existing building which maintains housing options in the downtown and brings a new commercial use to the area.
- **Traffic flow and safety, including parking and loading.**
The existing conditions on the site cannot meet the zoning ordinances off-street parking requirement given the intended use. The proposed parking configuration will not allow vehicles to exit the site facing the street. Within the proposal for the site, vehicles would be required to enter the driveway, and exit in reverse onto the street. Given the proposed parking configuration and the existing conditions of the street along, vehicular conflicts into and out of the site are minimized as South Sixth Street is one-way, with parking on one side of the street.

Special Permit (continued)

The existing asphalt surface has signs of wear and is uneven in areas. There is a minor dip, causing an inconsistency in the surface of the asphalt where the driveway meets the southern edge of the structure and at eastern edge of the driveway.

- **Adequacy of utilities and other public services.**

There are no anticipated changes to utilities or need for other public services as a result of this proposal.

- **Neighborhood character and social structures.**

This neighborhood is a mix of professional offices, civic, educational, and residential uses. Many of the historic homes on this block have been converted into professional offices. The proposal for a mixed use with residential units and a recording studio would not be out of character with the neighborhood.

- **Impacts on the natural environment**

The applicant is renovating an existing structure and the application for parking reduction utilizes the existing conditions on the site. As such, no new impacts on the natural environment are anticipated as a result of the proposal. Further, staff notes the surrounding neighborhood has many properties with paved parking areas resulting in a neighborhood with a large percentage of impervious surface area.

- **Potential fiscal impact, including impact on City services, tax base, and employment**

Having a mixed use residential and commercial use at this property will have a positive fiscal impact on the city and the broader neighborhood by improving property values. Staff does not believe any additional city services are necessitated by this application beyond those that currently serve the site.

Staff Recommendations



Special Permit Approval. Having reviewed the submitted materials, planning staff offers the following recommendations for conditions to the Planning Board should it act favorably on the requested Special Permit request for the project:

- ☐ That the following general conditions be applied to this decision:
 - The project shall be completed according to the plans, notes, reports, and specifications submitted for consideration and final approval by the Planning Board.
 - The applicant shall submit final plan revisions to the Planning Division in the following formats: one (1) -11" x 17" Plan Set and one (1) CD or USB with Plan Set in PDF format and shall ensure that these same plans are properly submitted to the Department of Inspectional Services.
 - The applicant shall ensure that a copy of the Notice of Decision, bearing the certification of the New Bedford City Clerk signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be provided for the Planning Division Case file folder.
 - The applicant shall present any proposed modification from the approved plans for consideration to the City Planner for determination as to whether the modified plan must return before this Board for further review.

- The rights authorized by the granted approval must be exercised by issuance of a Building Permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted or they will lapse.

Materials Provided by the Applicant are available at: <http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/planning-board/planning-board-agenda-info-2018/>

14 South Sixth Street Map: 46, Lot: 256

NOTE: Property line is approximate; for discussion purposes, only. Aerial map is oriented north.

