

# STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** November 18, 2020

**TO:** Board of Adjustment

**FROM:** Zoning Administration  
Planning & Development  
Services Department

**ACTIVITY NO. T20SA00296**

**C10-20-07 FIRE STATION NO. 9 REDEVELOPMENT / CITY OF TUCSON / 730  
SOUTH WILMOT ROAD / R-1**

The property is an approximately 1.38-acre lot zoned R-1 and is developed with a fire station. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing facility and construct a new 19,250 square foot single-story fire station.

## **THE APPLICANT'S REQUEST TO THE BOARD**

The applicant is requesting the following variances:

- 1) Allow the lot coverage for a protective service use to exceed 60%; and
- 2) Allow the number of required vehicle parking spaces to be reduced from 64 to 29 on-site spaces, all as shown on the submitted plans.

## **APPLICABLE TUCSON ZONING CODE SECTIONS**

Tucson *Unified Development Code (UDC)* sections applicable to this project include, in part, the following:

Section 4.7.8 *Residence Zone (R-1)* and Table 4.8-2 *Permitted Uses – Urban Residential Zones*, which provides the use criteria in the R-1 zone;

Sections 6.3.4 *Dimensional Standards and Exceptions Tables*, 6.4.3 *Lot Coverage And Site Coverage*, and Table 6.3-2.B *Exceptions to the R-1, R-2, R-3, MH-1, & MH-2 Dimensional Standards*, which provides the dimensional standards and rules of measurement applicable to all principal and accessory structures; and

Sections 7.4.4 *Required Number of Motor Vehicle Parking Spaces* which provides the required number of vehicle parking spaces.

## **GENERAL DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION**

### **Zoning and Land Use**

**SITE: ZONED R-1; (protective service)**

North: Zoned R-1; (church)

South: Zoned R-1; (single-family residential)

East: Zoned R-1; (single-family residential)

West: Zoned R-1; (single-family residential)

### **RELATED PLAN REVIEWS**

#### **Engineering**

The Engineering Section of Planning and Development Services Department has no objection/adverse comments.

### **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT FINDINGS**

The Board of Adjustment can hear and decide a variance request from the regulations listed in the Unified Development Code. The Board may grant a variance only if it finds the following:

1. That, because there are special circumstances applicable to the property, strict enforcement of the UDC will deprive such property of privileges enjoyed by other property of the same classification in the same zoning district.
2. That such special circumstances were not self-imposed or created by the owner or one in possession of the property.
3. That the variance granted is subject to such conditions as will assure that the adjustment authorized shall not constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which such property is located.
4. That, because of special circumstances applicable to the property, including its size, shape, topography, location, and surroundings, the property cannot reasonably be developed in conformity with the provisions of the UDC.
5. That the granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood in which the property is located.
6. That the proposed variance will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, substantially increase congestion, or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood.
7. That the variance, if granted, is the minimum variance that will afford relief and is the least modification possible of the UDC provisions which are in question.

### **ZONING ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERATIONS**

The property is an approximately 1.38-acre lot zoned R-1 and is developed with a fire station. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing facility and construct a new 19,250 square foot single-story fire station. The construction triggers compliance with Tucson *Unified Development Code (UDC)* sections applicable to the new construction.

### **Lot Coverage**

Per *UDC* Section 6.4.2 and Table 6.3-2.B, the maximum lot coverage for a protective service use is 60%. The total area of the proposed facility and vehicle use areas will result in a lot coverage of 79%.

### **Motor Vehicle Parking**

Per *UDC* Section 7.4.4 and Table 7.4.4-1, one vehicle parking space is required for every 300 square feet of gross floor area (GFA) for the protective service use (fire station). Based on a proposed 19,250 square foot facility, the required number of vehicle parking spaces is 64. The applicant is proposing to provide 29 spaces.

### **Discussion**

The property is located on the west side of South Wilmot Road, between Broadway Boulevard and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. The fire station was constructed in 1966 at the current location which did not include the two adjacent lots to the north which are now part of the property. The facility at the time consisted of two equipment bays and was staffed by six firefighters. The facility as it exists does not meet current National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidelines related to firefighter safety. Specifically, the facility must be able to provide separate sleeping quarters for gender neutral crews, space for turnout gear storage, a decontamination room, fitness area to reduce firefighter exposure to carcinogens and sufficient apparatus equipment in the bays. The existing fire station is not large enough to provide these separate spaces.

The applicant has explored several options in an effort to avoid requesting variances. First, although additional property was acquired to the north, the design based on functionality, safety and NFPA standards still creates a situation where a variance is needed for lot coverage. Second, a two-story building design was considered, however, this would not be compatible with the neighborhood, and would create the need for modifications to building setbacks. And third, relocating the facility to another property that would not negatively impact response times was explored and it was determined that there were no available properties within reasonable proximity to the existing location.

The gross floor area of the new facility does create a larger requirement for parking spaces, however, the amount provided will be more than the current 12 spaces on-site. The applicant's proposed 26 spaces for staff meets the industry standard of 1.5 times the shift count which is 17 firefighters per 24-hour shift. According to the applicant, this calculation model has been used by many fire departments and based on feedback, is sufficient to meet the needs of staff parking. Parking for staff will be located within a secured fenced area and three additional spaces will be provided near the public entrance for the occasional visitors. In order to avoid a variance for parking, either the building footprint would need to be reduced, which is not an option based on compliance with NFPA standards, or additional land would need to be purchased, which again is not available because of the existing church.

### **Conclusion**

Given that there are special circumstances such as the existing lot size and the need for a facility that is in compliance with current NFPA standards; and that these

circumstances are not self-imposed; and that the applicant has explored options to eliminate the need for variances and therefore the request is the minimum necessary to afford relief, staff supports the requested variances.

**NEIGHBORHOOD CONTACT (BY APPLICANT)**

See the attached neighborhood notification dated September 25, 2020, and the summary of the virtual meeting dated October 8, 2020.

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES RECOMMENDATION**

PDS staff recommends approval of the applicant's requested variances.

It is staff's opinion that there are physical circumstances applicable to the property; and because of special circumstances applicable to the property, it cannot reasonably be developed in conformity with the provisions of the *UDC*; and would not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood.

Mark Castro, Lead Planner  
for  
Russlyn Wells, Zoning Administrator

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