

FILE NO.: Z-5675-E

NAME: Philander Smith College Short-form POD

LOCATION: Located at 900 West Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive

DEVELOPER:

Philander Smith College
900 West Daily L. Gatson Bates Drive
Little Rock, AR 72202

ENGINEER:

Crafton Tull and Associates
10825 Financial Center Parkway, Suite 300
Little Rock, AR 72211

AREA: 2.05 acres NUMBER OF LOTS: 1 zoning lot FT. NEW STREET: 0 LF

CURRENT ZONING: R-3, Single-family with a Conditional Use Permit for
the college

ALLOWED USES: Residential and College

PROPOSED ZONING: POD

PROPOSED USE: College, creation of foreclosable lots around existing and proposed structures on the campus and create variances from the typical development standards of the subdivision ordinance

VARIANCE/WAIVERS: None requested.

BACKGROUND:

Philander Smith College has existed at this site since the early 1880's, and though it has expanded since then, as far as staff is aware, it has been compatible with the neighborhood. The site is zoned primarily R-4, Two-family district, with the northeast and southwest corner zoned C-3, General Commercial District. The surrounding zoning is a mixture of residential, office, commercial, industrial and Capitol Zoning District scattered all around the perimeter of this site. The majority of the abutting zoning is commercial and office except for a portion of the east side which is bounded by the Mount Holly Cemetery and is zoned R-2, Single-family.

On April 20, 1993, the Little Rock Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit request for the college to allow construction of a gymnasium, physical education building, business school building, swimming pool and a future academic building. Setback variances were approved for the buildings located along Chester Street and I-630.

On February 8, 2001, the Little Rock Planning Commission approved an amendment to the proposed phasing plan for the college. The Phased Master Plan included the following additions:

- Phase 1: Library with parking, southwest corner of the existing campus.
- Phase 2: Science and Health Mission Center, midway along Chester Street, west side of the campus, started within a year.
- Phase 3: Convert old gym in the center of the current campus into a student recreational facility, date unknown.
- Phase 4: Construction Elijah Pits Memorial Plaza, midway along south side of the campus, along Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive, date unknown.
- Phase 5 and beyond: Convert existing library into a fine arts facility, convert old science building into academic facilities and offices, construct additional student housing, new president's home and academic buildings as shown on the site plan. These changes will occur in 2003 and beyond.

The approved site plan addressed setbacks stating most setbacks were being met or were exceeding the setbacks typically required per the zoning district. Reduced setbacks were approved for an area along the northeastern portion of the site along Gaines Street and adjacent to property owned by Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church.

A building height variances was approved with the CUP request. The new buildings were to vary between two (2) and four (4) stories, with a maximum building height of 60 feet.

An overall parking plan was approved for the campus. Parking requirements for a college is one parking space for each 300 square feet of gross floor area or one (1) space for every four (4) students, whichever is greater. The approved CUP based the total parking required on the increase in building square footage since the number of required spaces would be more, 450 students – 112 parking spaces or 191,300 square feet of increased floor area – 637 new parking spaces. This resulted in the need for a total of 1,027 parking spaces to serve the campus. The approval allowed a variance to reduce the number of parking spaces to a total of 804 parking spaces including spaces located in the parking deck and 75 of the total spaces located off site, across Chester Street at the southwest corner of the campus.

On December 17, 2009, the Little Rock Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit request to allow the phased construction of four (4) new dormitory buildings on the campus. At the time the student enrollment was 600 students with an anticipated growth to 1,000 students. Each of the phases of the Master Plan included several phases within the phase. The Phase I portion of this development was to construct the four (4) new student housing buildings. Old unused dormitory buildings were to be removed to make way for the new construction. The new buildings were to be constructed on the east side of the campus; within the block bounded by Gaines Street and the former rights of way of West 12th Street, State Street and West 13th Street. Each building was approved three (3) stories with a maximum building height of 47.5-feet.

The overall parking plan was reviewed and approved. The parking requirement was to be 1,300 spaces for the usable 390,000 square feet of building space or 150 spaces for the 600 students. At the time there were 536 parking spaces of which only 150 were being used on a daily basis by the students and faculty. It was noted the master plan anticipated an enrollment of 1,000 students in 648,200 square feet of building area. Under the Master Plan presented a total of 740 parking spaces were to be located on the campus. The Commission approved the parking as proposed.

On December 15, 2011, the Little Rock Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit request to allow the construction of a campus center building on the campus. The plan indicated a 62,000 square foot dining/student center building as was indicated on the School's Master Plan which was presented to the Commission at their December 17, 2009 public hearing. The building was approved with a maximum building height of 45-feet. The building was proposed to contain all student services including post office, bookstore, recreational room, diner/coffee shop and cafeteria/dining area/kitchen. No new parking was required for this development.

A. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The applicant is now proposing the rezoning of a portion of the site from R-3, Single-family to Planned Office Development to allow the creation of a proposed plat/plan for Philander Smith College. Philander Smith is required by their lending institutions to create "foreclosable lots" around certain structures on the campus thus the need for the preliminary plat/planned office development rezoning request. The plat includes variances from the typical development standards of the subdivision and zoning ordinances with regard to setbacks and landscaping requirements. The proposed POD application is also addressing the proposed parking plan for the newly created lots on the existing campus. All other aspects of the proposed development are referenced within the approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP) requests as noted above and contained within the approved CUP files.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The college occupies most of an area contained within 12 blocks extending from I-630 on the north to Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive on the south and from Gaines Street on the east to Chester Street on the west. A large number of the buildings proposed in the overall master development plan have been constructed. There are three (3) to four (4) buildings proposed within the area proposed for rezoning to Planned Office Development which have not been constructed but are indicated on the site plan for future development. To the east is the Mt. Holly Cemetery. To the south are residential and non-residential use. Across Chester Street are properties zoned R-4, Two-family District, I-2, Light Industrial District and O-3, General Office District.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

As of this writing, staff has not received any comment from area property owners. All property owners located within 200 feet of the site along with the Downtown Neighborhood Association were notified of the public hearing.

D. ENGINEERING COMMENTS:

PUBLIC WORKS CONDITIONS:

1. At time of building permit, repair or replace any curb and gutter or sidewalk that is damaged in the public right-of-way prior to occupancy. In addition, old curb cuts maybe requested to be closed and access ramps installed at intersections.

E. UTILITIES AND FIRE DEPARTMENT/COUNTY PLANNING:

Wastewater: Sewer available to this project.

Entergy: Entergy does not object to this proposal. A three phase power line exists to the north along 12th Street and along South Gaines Street. Contact Entergy in advance regarding future service requirements to the development, desired line extensions, and future facilities locations as this project proceeds.

CenterPoint Energy: No comment received.

AT & T: No comment received.

Central Arkansas Water:

1. All Central Arkansas Water requirements in effect at the time of request for water service must be met.

2. The Little Rock Fire Department needs to evaluate this site to determine whether additional public and/or private fire hydrant(s) will be required. If additional fire hydrant(s) are required, they will be installed at the Developer's expense.
3. Please submit plans for water facilities and/or fire protection system to Central Arkansas Water for review. Plan revisions may be required after additional review. Contact Central Arkansas Water regarding procedures for installation of water facilities and/or fire service. Approval of plans by the Arkansas Department of Health Engineering Division and the Little Rock Fire Department is required.
4. If there are facilities that need to be adjusted and/or relocated, contact Central Arkansas Water. That work would be done at the expense of the developer.
5. Contact Central Arkansas Water regarding the size and location of water meter.
6. Due to the nature of this facility, installation of an approved reduced pressure zone backflow preventer assembly (RPZA) is required on the domestic water service. This assembly must be installed prior to the first point of use. Central Arkansas Water requires that upon installation of the RPZA, successful tests of the assembly must be completed by a Certified Assembly Tester licensed by the State of Arkansas and approved by Central Arkansas Water. The test results must be sent to Central Arkansas Water's Cross Connection Section within ten days of installation and annually thereafter. Contact the Cross Connection Section at 501.377.1226 if you would like to discuss backflow prevention requirements for this project.
7. Fire sprinkler systems which do not contain additives such as antifreeze shall be isolated with a double detector check valve assembly. If additives area used, a reduced pressure zone back flow preventer shall be required.

Fire Department: **Maintain Access:**

Fire Hydrants. Maintain fire apparatus access roads at fire hydrant locations as per Appendix D of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1 **Section D103.1 Access road width with a hydrant.** Where a fire hydrant is located on a fire apparatus access road, the minimum road width shall be 26 feet, exclusive of shoulders.

Fire Hydrants. **Locate Fire Hydrants as per Appendix C of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code.** Section C101 – C105, in conjunction with Central Arkansas Water (Jason Lowder 501.377.1245) and the Little Rock Fire Marshal's Office (Captain Tony Rhodes 501.918.3757 or Capt. John Hogue 501-918-3754). Number and Distribution of Fire Hydrants as per Table C105.1.

Parks and Recreation: No comment received.

County Planning: No comment.

Rock Region Metro: No comment.

F. ISSUES/TECHNICAL/DESIGN:

Building Code: Project is subject to full commercial plan review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit. For information on submittal requirements and the review process, contact a commercial plans examiner:

Curtis Richey at 501.371.4724; crichey@littlerock.org or
Mark Alderfer at 501.371.4875; malderfer@littlerock.org.

Planning Division: This request is located in the Central City Planning District. The Land Use Plan shows Public Institutional (PI) for this property. The Public Institutional category includes public and quasi-public facilities that provide a variety of services to the community such as schools, libraries, fire stations, churches, utility substations, and hospitals. The applicant has applied for a rezoning from R-4, Two-family District to POD (Planned Office Development District) to allow for the division of the area into four (4) lots with various academic buildings and dorms on the site.

Master Street Plan: Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive is as Collector on the Master Street Plan. The primary function of a Collector Street is to provide a connection from Local Streets to Arterials. This street may require dedication of right-of-way and may require street improvements for entrances and exits to the site.

Bicycle Plan: A Class II Bike Lane is shown along Daisy L Gatson Bates Drive. Bike Lanes provide a portion of the pavement for the sole use of bicycles.

Landscape:

1. Site plan must comply with the City's landscape and buffer ordinance requirements.
2. The City Beautiful Commission recommends preserving as many existing trees as feasible on this site. Credit toward fulfilling Landscape Ordinance requirements can be given when preserving trees of six (6) inch caliper or larger.

G. SUBDIVISION COMMITTEE COMMENT: (September 16, 2015)

Mr. Frank Riggins of Crafton Tull and Associates was present representing the request. Staff presented an overview of the item stating there were no outstanding technical issues associated with the request. Staff stated the request was to allow the creation of a plat/plan to allow lots, setbacks and landscaping inconsistent with the typical development standards of the various ordinances.

There were no more issues for discussion. The Committee then forwarded the item to the full Commission for final action.

H. ANALYSIS:

There were no outstanding technical issues associated with the request in need of addressing raised at the September 16, 2015, Subdivision Committee meeting. The applicant request is to rezone this area of Philander Smith College to a Planned Office Development from R-3, Single-family to allow the creation of a proposed plat/plan for the college.

As a part of financing Philander Smith is being required by their lending institutions to create "foreclosable lots" around certain structures on the campus. Since the lots are substandard lots per the typical development standards of the various City ordinances and the building setbacks would not comply with the typical development standards of the various ordinances the College is requesting the rezoning to allow the creation of a plat/plan by the rezoning to Planned Office Development.

The general purpose section of the zoning ordinance for the planned zoning district states the planned unit development and planned development districts are established to permit the combination of subdivisions and zoning review for parcels of land into one (1) process in order that all aspects of a proposed development can be reviewed and acted upon simultaneously. It is also the intent of the planned zoning district process to permit the use of flexible guidelines rather than fixed zoning or subdivision regulations in the administrative review of specific development plans. The ordinance states by permitting and encouraging the use of such procedures, the Planning Commission and Board of Directors are able to make more informed land use decisions and thereby guide development more effectively in the best interest of the health, safety and welfare of the City.

All other aspects of the development of the campus with regard to parking, signage, building heights should be referred back to the approved Conditional Use Permit requests as noted in the background section above and contained within the approved CUP files.

Staff is supportive of the applicant's request. Staff does not feel the rezoning to allow the creation of the plat/plan as proposed by the applicant will adversely impact this development or the area.

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the request subject to compliance with the comments and conditions as outlined in paragraphs D, E and F of the agenda staff report.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(OCTOBER 8, 2015)

The applicant was present. There were no registered objectors present. Staff presented the item with a recommendation of approval of the request subject to compliance with the comments and conditions as outlined in paragraphs D, E and F of the agenda staff report. There was no further discussion. The item was placed on the consent agenda and approved as recommended by staff by a vote of 9 ayes, 0 noes and 2 absent.