13 July 2007

City of Houston Parking Commission
George R. Brown Convention Center
1001 Avenida de las Americas
Houston, TX 77010

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you on July 10th to present Rice University’s proposal for a parking variance for the Shakespeare Graduate Apartments. At that meeting, several questions were asked that required follow up research. I write today to provide the answers to those questions:

What is the ratio of parking spaces to beds at the current Shakespeare graduate student housing units?

The existing graduate housing on Shakespeare is in no way comparable to the proposed new apartment project since that new facility will have secure indoor storage for 100 bicycles (for a 137-unit complex) and be served by the campus shuttle service, amenities which the current 1940s-era buildings do not enjoy. That said, the figures for the current (old) graduate housing on Shakespeare are:

North side of Shakespeare, even numbered addresses 2402-2436 (will be demolished):
47 parking spaces, 56 beds, 50 apartments (45 x 1-br, 4 x 2-br, 1 x 3-br)

South side of Shakespeare, odd numbered addresses 2401 to 2409 (will remain unchanged):
22 parking spaces, 27 beds, 23 apartments (16 x 1-br, 2 x 2-br, 1 x 3-br, 1 x 4-br)

A far more accurate comparison is Rice’s other graduate apartment facility on Bissonnet, which is served by a campus shuttle as we propose to do on Shakespeare. The comparison data for these projects is:

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<th>Demonstrated Demand</th>
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<tr>
<td>BISSONNET</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peak Year</td>
<td>80 Registered parkers = 80 spaces / 222 beds = .360 parking spaces/bed</td>
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<tr>
<td>This Year</td>
<td>71 Registered parkers = 71 spaces / 222 beds = .319 parking spaces/bed</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHAKESPEARE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>94 parking spaces / 238 beds = .395 spaces/bed (better, even with variance)</td>
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(Includes 7 registered visitor parking spaces at Shakespeare; at the Bissonnet site, the largest recorded number of registered visitors was 56 in May of 2006, an average of less than 2 per day.)

Room breakdown:

Bissonnet: 12 efficiencies, 14 x 1-br, 74 x 2-br, 12 x 4-br = 112 units (222 beds, 120 parking spaces)
Shakespeare: 15 efficiencies, 21 x 1-br, 101 x 2-br = 137 units (238 beds, 94 parking spaces)
What is the proposed width of the parking spaces at Shakespeare?

All spaces are 9’ x 19’, except handicapped accessible spaces which are 8’ x 19’ with a 5’ drive aisle as required by Texas Accessibility Standards.

Can additional parking spaces be added by converting some to “compact car” spaces?

The City of Houston requires a wider drive aisle for compact car spaces, which would not be possible given the narrowness of the site and the desire to preserve set-back as requested by our neighbors.

Why doesn’t Rice utilize underground parking?

Underground parking was considered, but estimates showed it would add nearly $2.5 million to the cost of the project. Increasing the overall project cost by this much would necessitate raising rents to levels beyond the means of the graduate student population that the housing development is designed to serve, and/or greatly enlarging the building to add units to provide revenue to compensate for the increased cost.

How do you enforce the parking registration requirement at the Bissonnet apartments?

From the RGS web site (http://gradapts.rice.edu/index.php?topgroupid=1&subgroupid=11&groupid=7):

**Where can I park my car?**

Parking is available at the RGA [Rice Graduate Apartments, on Bissonnet] after payment of a $5/year permit fee. An access clicker will be issued after you turn in your vehicle registration form. Parking spaces are not reserved and are first-come, first-served. All cars without a permit are subject to towing at owners’ expense.

Please note that many RGA residents do not have or need cars because of the free shuttle service provided both to campus and to area shopping centers. This same type of service will be offered at Shakespeare.

What is the requirement to live at Bissonnet?

The Rice Graduate Apartments building is open to Rice University graduate students only. Students at other universities (except for Rice-sponsored summer programs), post-docs, and non-students are not eligible to apply for housing. In addition, married students are not allowed, as all apartments are same-sex. (Rice University does have alternate housing available for families).

What is the requirement to live at Shakespeare?

The same as Bissonnet with the exception of eight 2-bedroom apartments that are available for a graduate student and a maximum of two additional family members (e.g: a student, a spouse and child).

How many units at Shakespeare will be available to students whose partner is not a full-time student?

How many units at Shakespeare are designed to accommodate children?

A maximum of eight, as noted above.
What is the proposed campus shuttle schedule to the Shakespeare project?

7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday at 20-30 minute intervals, supplemented by weekend shopping shuttles and a 7 day a week 24 hour a day campus escort service.

What percent of Rice graduate students are married?

By law, universities and employers are not allowed to require that prospective students or employees report their marital status when applying, nor once they are admitted or employed. Voluntary self-reported data from Rice University graduate students enrolled in 2006/2007 indicated that 113 were married or remarried, with 1116 (more than half of the graduate student population) opting not to respond to the survey (calling into question the statistical relevance of this data). In any event, this question is better answered by the responses to the last three questions on the preceding page: a maximum of eight out of 137 apartments at the Shakespeare project will house married graduate students.

What is the percent of international graduate students at Rice?

In the 2006/2007 academic year, 529 of 1209 doctoral students (43.7%) and 147 of 804 masters degree candidates (17.5%) were international graduate students. Overall, 676 of 2013 graduate students (33.6%) are international students. As stated in Rice’s Vision for the Second Century (www.rice/edu/v2c), the university intends to increase the percentage of international students at Rice in the future.

What percent of graduate students own cars?

The Rice Parking Office reports that 950 graduate students registered vehicles in the 2006-07 school year.

How many parking spaces are available in the Greenbriar parking lot?

The Greenbriar parking lot is a free campus visitor lot located three blocks from the Shakespeare Graduate Apartments. According to the Rice University Parking Office, the capacity of the lot is 1550 spaces and normal weekday usage is 450-500 spaces or approximately 30%. This lot contains a lighted, covered shuttle bus stop with a security telephone, is served by the existing Rice shuttle service, and would be available for Shakespeare Graduate Apartments visitors.

How many parking spaces are available at the Greenbriar Annex parking lot?

The Greenbriar Annex lot is the faculty and staff parking lot used by occupants of Rice’s 5620 Greenbriar building, and is located two blocks from the Shakespeare Graduate Apartments. According to the Rice University Parking Office, the capacity of the lot is 120 spaces and normal weekday usage is estimated at 33%. The lot is empty on evenings and weekends, so Shakespeare visitors would have the option to park as registered visitors in the apartment parking lot, or at this site, two blocks from the project.

Does Rice intend to “flip” or sell the property?

Rice has no plans to sell this property, now or ever, and will happily execute legal documents tying the requested parking variance to the university’s continued ownership. Thus, if the land ever did sell, the variance would be nullified and prevailing city parking restrictions would take effect. Also note, the requested variance is project specific: even if Rice wishes to demolish the proposed apartments and rebuild something else on the site at a future date, parking would need to be addressed anew at that time.
I hope that the answers provided in this document and the information contained in Rice’s initial presentation letter of 10 July 2007 offer the members of the Parking Commission the background and data needed to evaluate the university’s parking variance request. Based on eight years of experience operating the nearby Rice Graduate Apartments on Bissonnet, the university feels that the Shakespeare Graduate Apartments project as designed has adequate parking for its tenants and visitors, and we respectfully request that the Houston Parking Commission vote to recommend approval of Rice University’s requested parking variance for this project.

Cordially yours,

Greg Marshall
Director of Community & Government Relations
Rice University