DIRECTOR’S DETERMINATION
OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENTS
FOR
RICE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENT HOUSING
2402 – 2504 SHAKESPEARE

AUGUST 27, 2007

Criteria for Director's Determination (Sec. 26-493)

The Director shall consider:

1. Documentation supplied by the applicant regarding actual parking demand for the proposed use;
2. Evidence or data in available planning and technical studies relating to the proposed use;
3. Required parking for the proposed use as determined by other comparable jurisdictions; and
4. Required parking for similar uses.

Documentation supplied by the applicant

The applicant submitted an application for an off-street parking variance seeking a reduced parking requirement from the "apartment house" occupancy classification. The proposed Graduate Student Housing facility is a four-story 137 unit apartment complex that will include 15 efficiency, 21 one-bedroom, and 101 two-bedroom units for a total of 238 beds. The proposed Graduate Student Housing project includes approximately 100 parking spaces for a planned graduate student resident population between 230 and 238 with approximately 10 to 24% of surplus parking spaces, resulting in a .42 parking ratio.

The basis for the applicant's projected parking requirements is the following:

1. The unique graduate student population will be rented by “bed” with the exception of 8 family units.
2. The University’s residential application and selection process will limit the number of selected "students with cars" to 94.
3. There are adequate permanent university and METRO transit facilities which reduces the parking demand. The proposed facility will be supported by the university shuttle service. Daily shuttle service to and from campus runs every 20 minutes from 7am to 10pm.
4. The location of the proposed facility is proximate to the university, employment and social activities. Weekend shuttle is provided Friday and Saturday to and from campus to the Rice Village at 20 minute intervals from 5:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m., to and from Fiesta Mall at 30 minute intervals.
from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. A second shuttle will loop the campus to Fiesta Mall at 30 minute intervals from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

5. Graduate student residents will be provided Passport to Houston cards which provide a 50% reduction in cost for combined METRO passes.

6. The proposed facility will provide 100 free secured bicycle storage units.

7. Free visitor parking is located about 600 feet away from the facility.

8. The University's experience with existing graduate student housing at 1515 Bissonnet Street supports the conclusion that the proposed facility will have a reduced parking demand. The facility has a total of 222 beds and 120 parking spaces for a ratio of .54 spaces per bed with a utilization of 72 registered cars during the 2006-2007 school year. Rice University studies indicate that first-year graduate students are largely international students who do not typically own a vehicle and utilize other transportation opportunities including the Rice University shuttle bus service or METRO bus/rail service, personal bikes, and pedestrian paths to campus.

9. The University's Passport to Houston Annual report for 2005 – 2006 shows 750,000 total university shuttle boardings and 110,731 total METRO pass trips for a undergraduate student population of about 2,800 and total student population of about 4,000.

10. The University will implement a process to balance and manage the student population with cars between the Shakespeare and Bissonnet facilities to distribute the parking demand.

**Planning data relating to the proposed use**

The proposed graduate student housing facility does not fit into any type of occupancy described in Section 26-492, because there is no type of occupancy that relates to a college or university dormitory facility. While there is a type of occupancy classification for college or university facility, the classification does not distinguish between classroom buildings and residential buildings. The proposed facility for graduate student apartments does not fit the definition of "apartment house" because apartment house facilities are marketed to the general public for rental and are not limited to a university student population. Nor does the proposed facility fit the "special residential uses" type of occupancy relating to facilities for the physically or mentally handicapped.

**Comparable Jurisdictions**

Parking requirements were investigated in Cities with development patterns similar to Houston and universities located in an urban area. The following table shows ratios for graduate housing/dorms.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Use Classification</th>
<th>Parking Ratio</th>
<th>Parking Ratio Applied Shakespeare Facility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seattle, Washington</td>
<td>Graduate student housing</td>
<td>.33 or .25 per bed if transit subsidies provided</td>
<td>60 to 79 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlottesville, Virginia</td>
<td>Student Apartment Housing</td>
<td>.16 to .5 per bed depending on proximity to campus and transit facilities</td>
<td>38 to 119 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>Dorm</td>
<td>.5 per bed</td>
<td>119 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston: Rice U. Bissonet Facility</td>
<td>Graduate student housing</td>
<td>.54 per bed (actual utilization at .32 per bed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston: Rice U. Shakespeare Facility</td>
<td>Graduate student housing</td>
<td>.42 per bed (proposed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parking requirements for similar uses in Houston**

For comparison, an existing graduate student housing facility use that is proximate in distance from campus and number of beds to the proposed Graduate Student Housing project is Rice University's existing facility located on 1515 Bissonnet Street. This facility was built in the late 1990's, and has operated effectively with a reduced demand for parking for the past 8 years. The Bissonnet site has 112 units composed of 12 efficiencies; 14 one bedroom; and 12 four bedroom units with a total of 222 beds. This facility has 120 parking spaces for a ratio of .54 spaces per bed. According to Rice University's records, the Bissonnet project had 72 registered cars during the 2006-2007 school year.

**DIRECTOR'S DETERMINATION**

The Director finds that the proposed graduate student housing facility is a residential student facility use not addressed in the type of occupancy classification for college or university building, or apartment house. The Director further finds that Rice University's experience with the existing Bissonnet Street graduate housing facility supports the proposal for 100 parking spaces for the University Graduate Student Housing facility as sufficient for residents and visitors. There are adequate permanent university and METRO transit facilities proximate to the proposed facility which will reduce the parking demand, lower the parking ratio required, and not necessitate spillover parking. In addition, the
proposal to provide a ratio of .42 spaces per bed is comparable to what is required of facilities in other jurisdictions.

Additionally, Rice University has made a commitment to cooperate with the community by providing the university telephone number for reporting parking problems and concerns. The University also commits to hire a traffic and parking consultant to monitor parking practices of residents and visitors of the Shakespeare Graduate Apartments and report the consultant’s findings to the Director following the first year of occupancy.

**PARKING REQUIREMENT**

The parking requirement for the proposed 238 bed graduate student housing facility use is .42 parking spaces per bed.

This determination is limited to the type of occupancy described above for graduate student housing and does not extend to any other future use or type of occupancy. In the event a different type of occupancy takes place on the site, this determination shall terminate without further action by the Director.

Marlene L. Gafrick  
Director

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