

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**



April 7, 2016

Planning Variance case no. PV16-04: Betty Hubenak

CASE DESCRIPTION: a request for approval of a 17-foot variance from the minimum 70-foot lot width required for properties intended to be developed with a duplex, to allow the proposed construction of a duplex on a lot that is only 53 feet in width

LOCATION: 4400 College Main Street, being 0.1326 acres of land out of the J.E. Scott League adjoining the southwest side of College Main Street between Adams and Foch Streets

ZONING: Multiple – Family Residential District (MF)

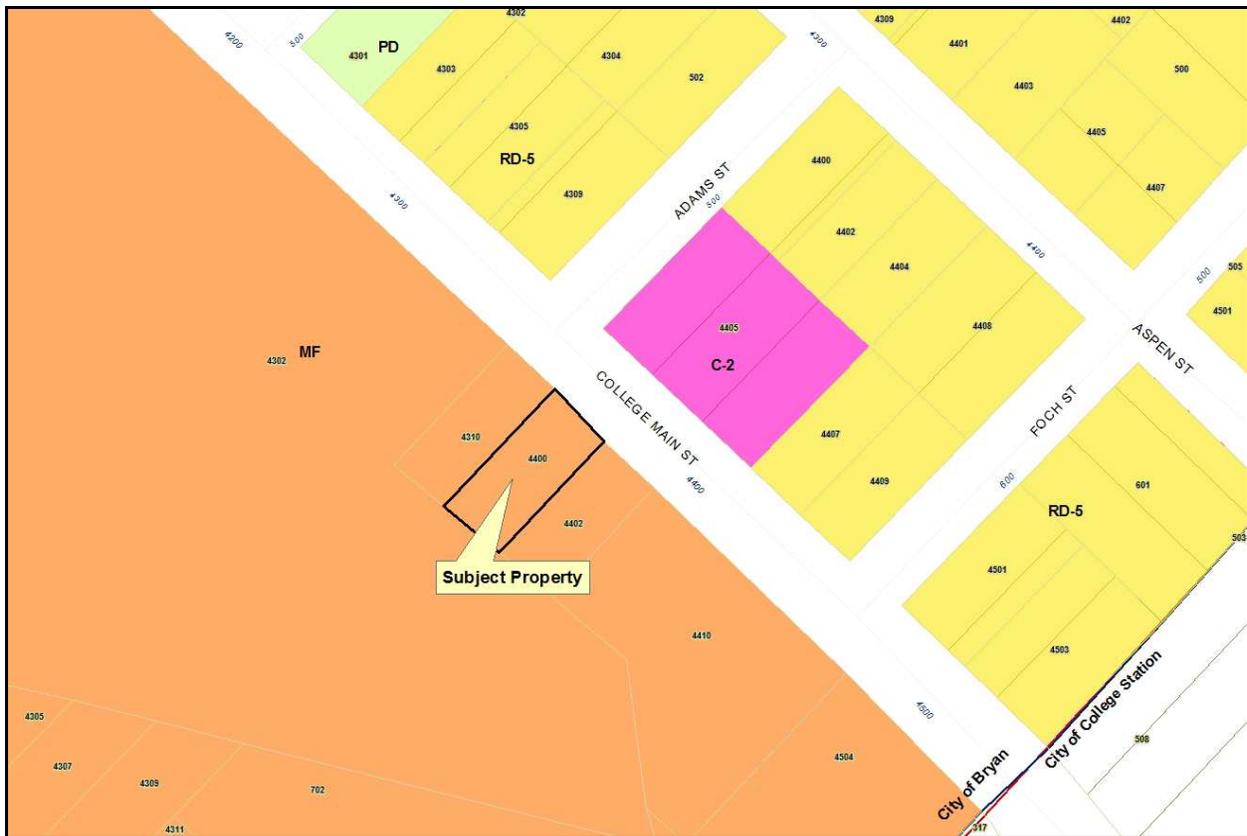
EXISTING LAND USE: vacant land

PROPERTY OWNER: Betty Hubenak

AGENT: Mark Weber, Weber Custom Homes

STAFF CONTACT: Stephanie Doland, Staff Planner

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends **denying** the requested variance.



any other evidence of City of Bryan board or Commission action that would have authorized a duplex on the adjacent property. It is important to note that the 70-foot lot width requirement only exists for duplex lots. Multi-family residential developments such as a triplex, a fourplex, apartments, are not required to observe a minimum 70-foot lot width requirement.

The applicant is proposing to develop the property with a 2-story duplex with one unit on each level. Each of the proposed units would have 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and one parking space for each of the bedrooms (a total of 6 off-street parking spaces).

Since 1997, the City of Bryan has invested in the redevelopment of College Main through various road improvements including, resurfacing the road, sidewalks, additional lighting and street scape design. College Main Street serves as a major collector on the thoroughfare plan and as a main gateway to the Texas A&M campus. Because of the close proximity to the A&M Campus, college students have begun to move into the neighborhood and encourage redevelopment in the area. In recent years the area has begun to redevelop from single-family homes to higher density units such as townhomes, condos, fourplex units and apartments.

APPLICANT REQUEST:

- ① We are requesting a variance to the rule that states that a duplex can only be built on a property that is 70 feet in width. The width of the property that we are requesting a variance for is 53 feet in width
- ② Yes. This property, which is zoned for multi-family is not large enough to encompass any more than two units due to the size constraints and the requirement to have the appropriate amount of parking. The property is not large enough to contain the parking that would be needed for three units or more. We feel that a single family residence would not fit in with the feel of the area, especially since the adjacent properties are multi-family and/or rental units.
- ③ Yes. Due to the size constraints of this property, the only way to improve the property that matches the area, is through our proposed plans. Without such improvements, the property will be forced to be left vacant.
- ④ By granting the variance and allowing our duplex stack to be built at 4400 College Main, there will be no impact on the public health, safety, or welfare in the area. Our improvements will be almost identical to the property that is adjacent, both in size and in site layout. The city has already constructed a driveway inlet on 4400 College Main thus the increase in vehicles coming from there has already been accounted for.
- ⑤ Our proposed variance to build a duplex at 4400 College Main will not only fit in to the residential land use that is currently adjacent to the property, but will be the exact same land use as the property next door at 4310 College Main. 4310 College Main is also a duplex stack and is almost identical in design to which we are proposing. Please see attached photo

STREET VIEW MARCH 2016:



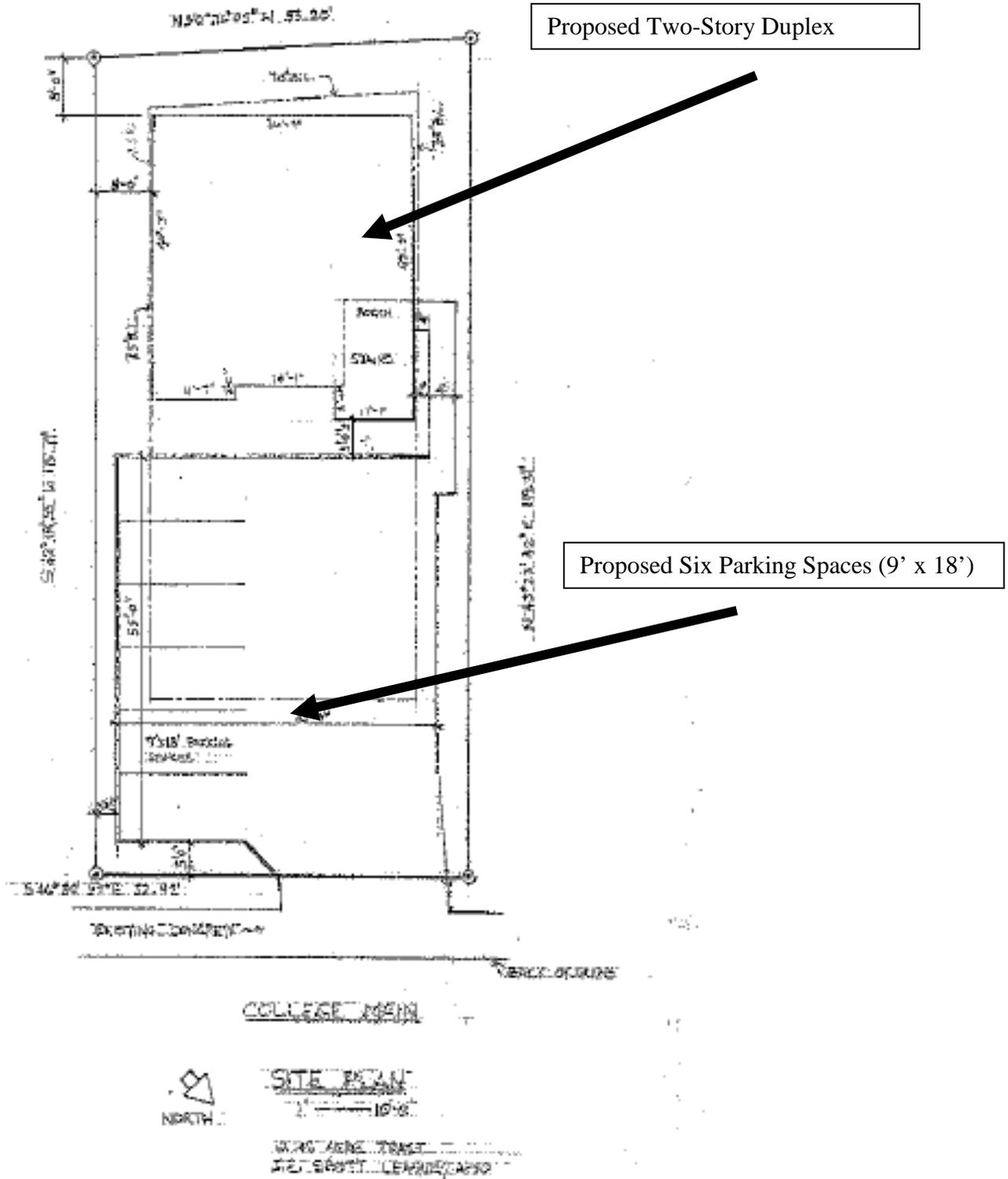
4400 College Main



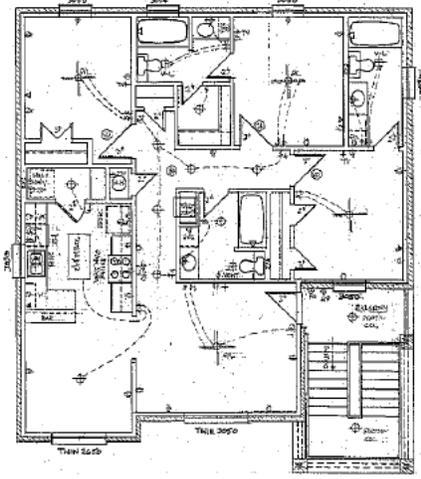
4400 College Main



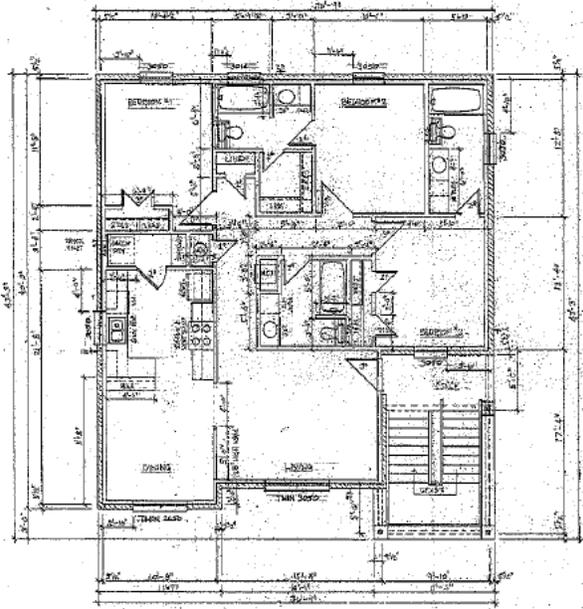
PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT:



PROPOSED SITE PLAN:



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
 1/4" = 1'-0"
 SEE FIRST FLOOR PLAN FOR DIMENSIONS AND NOTES.
 EXISTING WALLS SHOWN IN DASHED.
 OPENING TO STAIR ACCESS LOCATED.

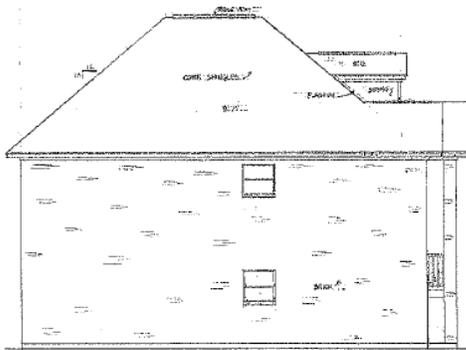


ENERGY REQUIREMENTS
 GLAZING TRANSMITTANCE
 EXTERIOR IMPACT RESISTANCE
 CEILING INSULATION
 WALL TRANSMISSION

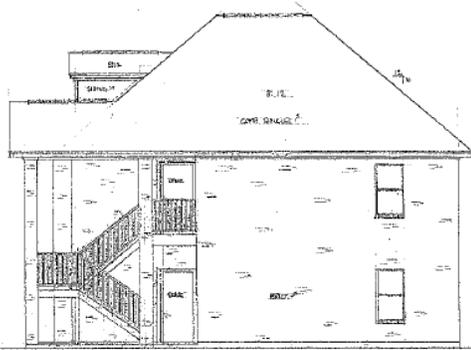
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 1/4" = 1'-0"
 SEE SECOND FLOOR PLAN FOR DIMENSIONS AND NOTES.

BUILDING SYSTEMS
 HEATING: 1307 S.E.
 INSULATION: 1111 S.E.
 SLAB: 1491 S.E.

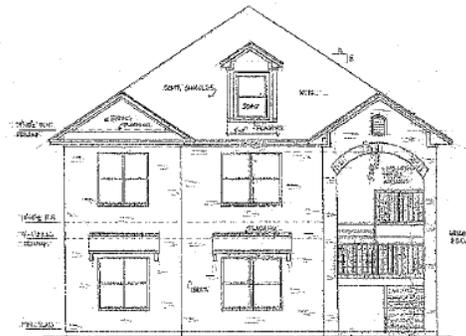
PROPOSED BUILDING ELEVATIONS:



EAST SIDE ELEVATION
 1/8" = 1'-0"

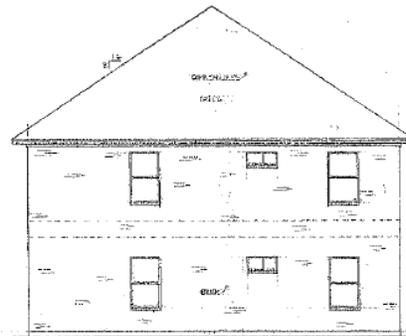


REAR SIDE ELEVATION
 1/8" = 1'-0"



FRONT ELEVATION
 1/8" = 1'-0"

SEE FIRST FLOOR PLAN FOR DIMENSIONS AND NOTES.
 EXISTING WALLS SHOWN IN DASHED.
 OPENING TO STAIR ACCESS LOCATED.



REAR ELEVATION
 1/8" = 1'-0"

ANALYSIS:

The Planning and Zoning Commission may authorize a variance from minimum lot standards stipulated in the Land and Site Development Ordinance. No variance shall be granted unless the Planning and Zoning Commission finds that all of the following criteria are met:

1. That the granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the area (an area encompassing approximately a 200-foot radius);

Minimum lot width requirements for duplexes are intended to help ensure that all lots to be developed with a duplex are of sufficient size and shape to facilitate the development as well as off-street parking requirements. The two-story duplex is proposed to be developed with parking in the front of the development along College Main Street and within the 25-foot front building setback. Recently the City of Bryan has invested in the redevelopment of College Main Street through repaving the road, improving sidewalks and pedestrian crossings and lighting improvements. With the redevelopment of College Main Street, and the close proximity to the Texas A&M campus properties adjacent to College Main Street have begun to redevelop with higher density student housing.

Other properties that have recently redeveloped or received development approvals in the College Main Street area, such as, for example, the Jefferson Street Townhomes, included reduced setbacks to property lines and off-street parking areas that are located to the rear or side of the main structure. Approving the proposed development on this property to mirror a 20-year old duplex development on the adjacent property therefore seems to contradict this recent trend of creating a higher-density, pedestrian-oriented environment in the areas along College Main Street. Under these circumstances, the proposed duplex may not be the most efficient or desirable use of limited urban land in close proximity to the Texas A&M University campus, where private (re-) development interest are expected to continue, following the City's investment in reconstructing College Main Street a few years ago.

Staff recognizes the space limitations to developing the property with multi-family residential use. However, an alternative to the requested variance would be the creation of a Planned Development (PD) zoning district, wherein development standards could be custom made to achieve a development that matches the trend for higher density, built almost to the property line that appears to have been set by other redevelopments in the College Main area. An additional alternative to the requested variance may be to redesign the proposed duplex into a triplex or fourplex of similar size. A triplex or a fourplex with a total of six bedrooms and six parking spaces would not require a variance request and would match the trend for higher density along College Main Street.

2. That the granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or materially injurious to properties abutting the subject property;

Staff believes that approving this variance request may encourage similar development proposals and variance requests in the College Main area, where many lots remain that do not meet lot standards for even a duplex development, which the Commission would then feel obligated to approve also. The long-term effect of such a variance approval may then be the (re-) development of the College Main Street corridor with single-family residential developments in the form of conventional single-family homes or duplexes, which may not be the return on

investment the City Council had hoped for when the reconstruction of College Main Street was authorized.

3. That the hardships and difficulties imposed upon the owner/applicant are greater than the benefits to be derived by the general public through compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

Again, staff acknowledges that there are space constraints to developing the property with a desirable higher-density residential development, but a Planned Development District proposal may be a viable alternative to a variance approval balancing both private and public interests in this particular case. Staff believes that planned control of redevelopment activity along the College Main corridor will not only protect the City's re-investment in the area, but can also be the greatest benefit to be derived by the general public in the long term. An additional alternative may be to develop a triplex or fourplex which would match the trend for higher density without requiring a variance request for the lot width. For several years now, staff has advocated for the development of a more particular small area land use plan for the area around College Main Street that could assist in better guiding land use decisions for specific properties in this Bryan neighborhood. Granting the requested variance on the other hand may eliminate more desirable development opportunities here.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on all of these considerations, staff recommends **denying** the requested variance.