



# MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 304, WATERTOWN, NY 13601  
PHONE: 315-785-7740 – FAX: 315-785-7829

TO: Planning Board Members  
FROM: Michael A. Lumbis, Planner  
SUBJECT: Waiver of Site Plan Approval – 505 Washington Street  
DATE: February 25, 2016

**Request:** Waiver of site plan approval for the construction of an approximately 2,408 square-foot parking lot expansion located at 505 Washington St., Parcel Number 11-05-212.000  
**Applicant:** Tim Titus of Aubertine and Currier, PLLC on behalf of Washington Street Properties, LLC  
**Proposed Use:** Parking lot for a multi-family residential building  
**Property Owner:** Washington Manor Apartments, LLC

## Submitted:

Property Survey: Yes	Preliminary Architectural Drawings: N/A
Site Plan: Yes	Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: No
Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: No	Construction Time Schedule: Spring
Landscaping and Grading Plan: No	Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: Uses are described. Hours and traffic volume are not.

SEQRA: Unlisted

County Review: No

## Zoning Information:

District: Limited Business	Maximum Lot Coverage: N/A
Setback Requirements: F: 20', S: 5', R: 25'	Buffer Zones Required: Yes

**Project Overview:** The applicant proposes to construct a 2,408 square-foot parking lot expansion and reconfigure the existing parking lot to service one of the apartment buildings on the property, which is currently under renovation. The proposed expansion would include a new driveway and curb cut on Keyes Avenue.

**Parking and Vehicle/Pedestrian Circulation:** There is currently only one vehicular access point to the site, a driveway connecting to Keyes Ave. on the north side of the property. The proposed expansion and restriping would add a second vehicular access point, also connecting to Keyes Ave, and would bring the total number of

parking spaces on the site from 15 to 33, which exceeds the required total of 31. The project also includes the creation of two accessible parking spaces.

The second access point and much of the proposed expansion will serve to create a drive aisle providing access to seven spaces that would have otherwise been double-stacked, including an accessible space. The proposed expansion will also create three parallel spaces on the eastern side of the newly created drive aisle.

The proposed reconfiguring of the existing lot does include three double-stacked spaces at the southern end of the site. In discussions with Staff, the applicant indicated that these spaces would be assigned to specific units in order to prevent anyone from being blocked in by a stranger's car.

**Setbacks:** The Zoning Ordinance requires a 5' side-yard setback in Limited Business Districts. The existing building at the southeast corner of the site, which the applicant proposes to use as storage, is between two and three feet from both the southern and eastern parcel boundaries, both of which are considered side yards since this is a corner parcel. An entry stoop actually extends over the eastern parcel boundary at one point. However, since this building was constructed in 1950, prior to the enactment of the Zoning Ordinance, it is grandfathered despite these nonconformities.

The proposal meets all other setback requirements of the Limited Business District.

**Landscaping and Buffers:** The Zoning Ordinance requires a 5'-15' landscaped buffer wherever any land use in a nonresidential district abuts land in any residential district. Although the proposed land use for this property is multi-family residential, the parcel is in a Limited Business District and it abuts a Residence C District on its eastern boundary. The applicant proposes a 15' landscaped buffer at the northeast corner of the site to separate the proposed parking lot expansion from the neighboring residential property. This area will be comprised of an existing lawn area and hedge row of trees.

As a part of restriping the existing parking lot, the applicant proposes to paint hatched lines at the northern edge of two rows of parking spaces to provide a buffer between parked cars and the sidewalk. This hatched buffer, which will enhance pedestrian safety on the City sidewalk, will range from three to six feet in depth.

**Accessible Space Standards:** New York State Building Code 1106.1.1 (Access Aisles) states that "accessible parking spaces shall be in conformance with ICC/ANSI A117.1, except that spaces shall be provided with access aisles at least eight feet (2440 mm) in width." The access aisle for the accessible space located on the north side of the main building is only six feet wide for most of the length of the aisle and therefore does not meet New York State Code.

As the applicant's proposal exceeds the site's parking requirement by two spaces, Staff recommends removing the northernmost parking space in this area and utilizing the area gained to provide both an access aisle that is wide enough to conform to code, and an adequate hatched buffer to separate parked cars from the City sidewalk, as is proposed on the east side of the drive aisle. The nine feet that the applicant would gain from reconfiguring this segment from three spaces to two would easily accomplish both these outcomes, and the site would still have one more parking space than its requirement.

**Utilities and Hydrology:** The applicant, in his cover letter, states that the proposed parking expansion area will be graded towards the landscaped buffer on the eastern side of the site, as currently sloped. Drainage from this area must not be directed onto adjoining parcels.

**Permits:** The applicant must obtain the following permits, minimally, prior to construction: a Building Permit and a General City Permit.

**Miscellaneous:** Although it is not depicted on the site plan, there is presently a dumpster near the southern property line. No refuse vehicle or refuse container shall be parked or placed within 15' of a party line without the written consent of the adjoining owner, if the owner occupies any part of the adjoining property. If the adjoining

property is rented or leased, then the owner of the adjoining property must file written consents with the Health Officer.

While a dumpster may have occupied a similar area on this site for many years, it is a stated objective of the Planning Board's adopted Landscaping Buffer Zone Guidelines that when an existing site is undergoing any external alteration or expansion, gradually to bring that site into compliance with the minimum standards. Thus, the applicant should obtain the written consent described above.

The applicant also states in his cover letter that the building at the southeast corner of the site is proposed for storage use. However, on the site plan, the building is labeled as eight units, and the parking calculation counts these units towards the site requirement. The applicant should clarify the proposed use of this building.

**Summary:**

1. The applicant shall reconfigure the cluster of three parking spaces adjacent to the northern edge of the main building; reducing the number of spaces from three to two, in order to provide an adequate access aisle for the accessible space and to provide adequate separation between the northernmost space and the City sidewalk.
2. The proposed parking expansion shall be graded such that drainage is not directed onto adjoining parcels.
3. The applicant shall obtain written consent from the neighboring property owner or lessee at 513 Washington Street to place a refuse container within 15' of the property line.
4. The applicant must obtain the following permits, minimally, prior to construction: a Building Permit and a General City Permit.

cc: City Council Members  
Brian Drake, Civil Engineer II  
Timothy F. Titus, Aubertine and Currier, PLLC, 522 Bradley St., Watertown, NY 13601  
Brian Murray, Washington Manor Apartments, LLC, 215 Washington St., Suite 1, Watertown, NY 13601