



MEMORANDUM

City of Watertown Planning Office

245 Washington Street, Room 304

Watertown, New York 13601

315-785-7730

Fax: 315-782-9014

TO: Norman J. Wayte II, Chairman, Planning Board

FROM: Kenneth A. Mix, Planning and Community Development Coordinator

SUBJECT: Site Plan Approval – 830 Washington Street

DATE: April 26, 2011

Request: Site Plan Approval for the construction of a 9,383 square foot addition and a 1,900 square foot addition and landscaping improvements at 830 Washington Street, Parcels Number 14-02-100 and 14-08-111

Applicant: Matthew J. Cooper, P.E. of Bernier, Carr & Associates, P.C. on behalf of Samaritan Medical Center.

Proposed Use: Healthcare facilities.

Property Owner: Samaritan Medical Center, Samaritan Keep Nursing Home.

Submitted:

Property Survey: Yes

Preliminary Architectural Drawings: Yes

Site Plan: Yes

Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: Yes

Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: Yes

Construction Time Schedule: Yes

Landscaping and Grading Plan: Yes

Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: Yes

SEQRA: Unlisted Action

County Planning Board Review Required: No

Zoning Information:

District: Health Services

Maximum Lot Coverage: None

Setback Requirements: Front: 20ft, Side: 5ft,
Rear: 25ft, Parking: 20ft.

Buffer Zone Required: Yes, 5 to 15 feet where site
abuts residential districts

Project Overview: The proposed project involves the construction of two enclosed connector structures: one between Samaritan Medical Center (SMC) and Samaritan Keep Home (SKH), and one between SMC and the attached medical office building (MOB) owned by Rothschild/Breuer Associates. The project also involves significant landscaping improvements, including a “therapeutic courtyard garden” between the SMC and the Keep Home.

Parking: The applicant did not submit updated parking calculations. Staff estimates that the site plan as submitted eliminates approximately 233 linear feet of parking, or about 25 spaces. Based on the submitted information and records from a previous site plan review in 2007, the medical complex requires 1,192 parking spaces. The current count is 1,291 spaces, and after construction of the proposed additions the count would be between 1,261 and 1,271—well above the required 1,192.

The applicant must provide a plan depicting the parking spaces and turn movements of the Fire Department’s ladder truck in the parking lot east of Samaritan Keep, and provide turn movements for vehicles travelling through the new loop to the west of the connector.

Grading, Drainage and Utilities: Due to capacity issues on the Pratt Street storm sewer, SMC must obtain approval for any increase in discharge of any storm water flow into the City’s storm sewer system, prior to issuance of a building permit. The applicant must provide pre- and post-construction drainage area maps to supplement the calculations in the engineering report.

The view of the Utility Plan should be shifted west so the proposed Pratt Street storm sewer connection can be seen. The grading plan needs to be updated to show existing contours, and proposed grading contours for the rest of the proposed site improvements. Further:

- The plans should show all existing storm sewer piping in areas where improvements are proposed.
- Any modifications or relocations to existing catch basins in the “therapeutic garden” area should be called out.
- A detail of the connection to the City’s sewer system should be added, and should specify a rubber booted connection.
- Add Inlet Protection to catch basins as needed, and provide a detail.

Water: An existing 6” water line leading from the 10” main to SKH is not depicted in the submitted plans. The proposed construction may interfere with this water line, so its relocation must be addressed.

The applicant must also update the site plan to depict an existing fire hydrant, in an island just east of the MOB Connector, which is missing from the plans.

The applicant must add the following note:

“All water main and service work must be coordinated with the City of Watertown Water Department. The Water Department requirements supersede all other plans and specifications provided.”

Traffic: No changes are required. The only alteration of the traffic pattern will be the elimination of the lane between SMC and Keep Home, and its replacement with two circular drives.

Lighting: Changes to the site lighting are minimal. No lighting/photometric plan was submitted, but the engineering report suggests that the few light poles that must be removed can be relocated without difficulty or negative impact on nighttime visibility.

Landscaping: Extensive landscaping and new plantings are proposed. The submitted landscaping plans include over 100 new tree plantings of various sizes throughout the site. The area between SMC and Keep Home on either side of the new connector will become a “therapeutic garden” for patients and residents. Initially the garden will be composed of a network of pathways with small grassy areas interspersed. In the second phase of the landscaping plan, these grass areas will be replaced with a mixture of evergreen shrubbery and groundcover, as described on the legend of the submitted landscaping plan.

In 2007, the City Council approved a landscaping plan for this parcel which included approximately 40 trees along Washington Street and Woodruff Street. The new construction that was the subject of that site plan review has been completed, but to date none of these ~40 plantings have been made. Staff recommends that the Planning Board seek some assurance as to when the proposed landscaping will be completed.

Other Comments: The proposed connector between SMC and the Rothschild/Breuer MOB will violate the setback requirements of the Health Services zoning designation. A previous area variance, granted in 2009 (file #457), allowed for relief from setbacks along this property line that would have prevented SMC from obtaining necessary financing for an expansion project. The relief in said area variance also applies to the proposed SMC-MOB connector.

The proposed connector between SMC and Samaritan Keep Home will also violate setback regulations. The Nursing Home has ownership of parcel 14-08-111, and SMC has ownership of parcel 14-02-100. The proposed connector crosses the boundary between these two parcels. In order for this project to be permitted, the applicant must either consolidate ownership and combine the two parcels, or be granted another area variance by the Zoning Board of Appeals. *Aforementioned variance #457 does not apply to the SMC-SKH connector.*

If the applicant decides to pursue an area variance and the Planning Board makes a recommendation on the site plan, it will have to be contingent upon the ZBA granting an area variance. Pursuant to New York General City Law § 33.6, the ZBA must ask for a written recommendation from the Planning Board on the variance. Staff is recommending that the Planning Board make a written recommendation now, in order to expedite the approval process.

Summary: The following lists the key issues that must be addressed:

1. The applicant should provide a schedule for completion of the landscaping plan, or other assurance of its timely completion as the Planning Board sees fit.
2. The applicant must choose a solution to the setback violation issue prior to permitting; either by variance or assemblage. If by variance, the Planning Board must make a written recommendation to the ZBA.
3. Provide a plan depicting the parking spaces and turn movements of the Fire Department’s ladder truck in the parking lot east of Samaritan Keep Home.
4. Provide turn movements for vehicles travelling through the new loop on the west side of the SMC-SKH connector.
5. Depict an existing 6 inch water line, going into Samaritan Keep Home from the 10 inch main, which is missing on the plans and explain how it will be affected by the new construction.

6. Depict an existing fire hydrant, in an island just east of the MOB Connector, which is missing from the plans.
7. Add the following note:

“All water main and service work must be coordinated with the City of Watertown Water Department. The Water Department requirements supersede all other plans and specifications provided.”
8. SMC must obtain approval to increase the discharge of any storm water flow into the City’s storm sewer system, prior to issuance of a building permit.
9. Shift the view of the Utility Plan west so the proposed Pratt Street storm sewer connection can be seen.
10. Provide pre- and post-construction drainage area maps.
11. Depict existing contours on the Grading Plan.
12. Provide proposed grading and contours for the rest of the proposed site improvements.
13. Depict all existing storm sewer piping in areas where improvements are being proposed.
14. Several catch basins and manholes are located in the proposed Therapeutic Garden area. Callout any modifications and/or relocations being proposed.
15. Add a detail of the connection to the City’s sewer system and specify a rubber boot connection.
16. Add Inlet Protection to catch basins as necessary and provide a detail.

cc: Planning Board Members
City Council Members
Robert J. Slye, City Attorney
Justin Wood, Civil Engineer II
Matthew J. Cooper, P.E.