



MEMORANDUM

City of Watertown Planning Office

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Watertown, New York 13601

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

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

SUBJECT: Waiver of Site Plan Approval – 1092 Coffeen Street – Allen’s Florist & Pottery Shop

DATE: June 1, 2011

Request: Waiver of Site Plan Approval for the construction of a 576 square foot addition and parking lot expansion for a florist and pottery shop to be located at 1092 Coffeen Street, Parcel Number 8-32-101.

Applicant: Loren V. Allen and Rhonda Hall-Allen

Proposed Use: Retail

Property Owner: Loren V. Allen and Rhonda Hall-Allen

Submitted:

Property Survey: Yes	Preliminary Architectural Drawings: Yes
Site Plan: Yes	Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: No
Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: No	Construction Time Schedule: Yes
Landscaping and Grading Plan: No	Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: Yes

SEQRA: Type II Action	County Planning Board Review Required: No
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Zoning Information:

District: Neighborhood Business	Maximum Lot Coverage: 40%
Setback Requirements: Front – 20 feet, Rear – 25 feet, West – 10 feet, East – none	Buffer Zone Required: 5-15 feet at eastern boundary

Project Overview: The applicant wishes to construct an addition to an existing structure, located at 1092 Coffeen Street, Parcel Number 8-32-101, in order to facilitate the operation of a florist and pottery shop. The existing building is two stories and approximately 860 square feet, and the addition will be one story and approximately 576 square feet. The total floor areas used for retail activities will be 1,116 square feet—it is assumed that the second story of the existing structure and the basement of the proposed addition will be used for storage or office space.

The addition will be attached to the east wall of the existing building, in roughly the same location as the (previously demolished) garage noted on the attached site survey. A large cased opening is shown connecting the addition to the existing structure, and there appears to be an unspecified new entrance on the eastern wall of the addition—opening into the proposed parking lot.

Parking: The applicant is proposing expand the existing gravel parking lot to accommodate 15-18 parking spaces which would exceed the number required by the Zoning Ordinance. Since the submitted site plan is only a sketch and is not really drawn to scale, it is unclear how large the parking lot expansion actually would be. Staff used the submitted site survey and tried to sketch the location of the existing and proposed parking areas on the plan based on the information provided by the applicant. It appears from our sketch that the proposed expansion would result in an increase in the parking lot area of over 2,500 square feet. That expansion, coupled with the building expansion would bring the total size of the expansion to more than 2,500 square feet, meaning that a full site plan approval may be required. However, if the applicant were to decrease the size of the parking lot expansion and provide a grassed buffer area around the perimeter of the lot, the total expansion would fall below the 2,500 square foot threshold. A 10' setback along the sidewalk, eastern and northern property lines would therefore be recommended. This will still provide enough parking area to safely allow two rows of parked cars and a driving lane in between.

The applicant is required to install a paved handicap parking space with an accessible route of travel to the retail entrance.

For the sake of safety and durability, it is advisable for the applicant to pave the entire parking lot now or in the future. However, this would significantly increase the impervious coverage of the site, and thus may require a Site Plan Approval from City Council.

Lighting: No lighting plan was submitted. The applicant should submit a lighting plan or provide additional details on how the parking area will be illuminated. Care should be taken to avoid light spillage across property lines. Of particular concern would be spillage across the north boundary into the windows of the adjacent residential building.

Landscaping: No landscaping plan was submitted. The Planning Board's Landscaping and Buffer Zone Guidelines recommend a 15' wide buffer between the sidewalk and the parking lot along Coffeen Street as well as perimeter parking lot landscaping. As noted above, a 10' setback along the sidewalk, eastern and northern property lines will likely be necessary for the proposed parking area. This setback area should be planted with trees spaced 40' on center in accordance with the Guidelines.

Setbacks: The existing structure violates the rear yard requirement for NBD of 25 feet. The building is 13.7 feet from the rear property line. It also violates the side yard requirement for corner lots in NBD of 10 feet. The building is 6.22 feet from the western property line, along Hycliff Street.

The proposed addition will also violate the rear yard setback. Its rear corner will be approximately 10 feet from the rear boundary, assuming the rear wall of the building is extended along the same bearing as the existing structure.

An Area Variance request has been submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the addition. The existing structure was built in the 1940s, most likely prior to the adoption of the current setback regulations. Thus, it may remain as a Continuation, as stipulated under § 310-38.

In accordance with New York General City Law § 33.6, the ZBA must seek a written recommendation from the Planning Board on this Variance. It is recommended that the Planning Board make their recommendation preemptively to expedite the approval process. The next ZBA meeting is June 15, 2011.

Other Comments: The planning board may waive site plan approval if it determines that this proposal meets the criteria for a waiver listed in Section 310-55 of the Zoning Ordinance:

- 1) Does not involve a change in the boundaries of the property, and
- 2) Does not represent the initial building on the property, and
- 3) Is minor and incidental in size to the existing building pattern, size and coverage on the property, but in no event shall exceed 2,500 square feet, and
- 4) Does not effectively change or impair the overall grading, circulation, drainage, utility services, and appearance and visual effect of the property and is also otherwise consistent with all purposes of this chapter.

The Planning Staff have reviewed the criteria listed above, and have concluded that all four points have been satisfied. Although the building footprint is doubling in size, the total footprint will only be approximately 1,100 square feet—which may be considered of minor and incidental size when compared to other structures in the area. If the Planning Board agrees with this assessment, then a waiver can be granted.

In the case of a waiver, the submissions listed in Section 310-56 are not required.

Since the proposed construction and expansion of the facility involves less than 4,000 square feet of gross floor area and the action does not involve a change in zoning or a use variance and is consistent with local land use controls, the project is considered a Type II Action as defined by SEQR. Type II Actions do not require SEQR review, and the Short Environmental Assessment Form does not need to be completed by the Planning Board for this project.

Any proposed signage for the project will be handled as a separate matter through the Bureau of Code Enforcement.

Summary: The following lists several key issues that should be addressed:

- 1) The applicant must not increase the size of the parking area by more than 2,500 ft², otherwise a full Site Plan Approval will be required. To avoid this threshold, the applicant should maintain a 10 foot minimum setback along the south, east, and north margins of the parking lot.
- 2) The applicant must install a paved handicap parking space with an accessible route to the retail entrance.

- 3) The applicant should consider paving the parking lot to increase its durability and safety.
- 4) The applicant should install lighting for the parking lot, considering that the business is expected to operate in the evenings.
- 5) The applicant must install a 10' wide landscaped buffer along the Coffeen Street and North Hycliff Drive frontage, including large deciduous shade trees every 40 feet with planting beds in between. Along Coffeen Street, these plantings may be made in the same 10' buffer mentioned in Item 1 of this list.
- 6) The applicant must obtain an Area Variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals, reducing the rear yard setback requirement. The Planning Board will need to make a written recommendation to the ZBA on this matter.

cc: Planning Board Members
Robert J. Slye, City Attorney
Justin Wood, Civil Engineer II
Loren V. Allen, 10672 County Rte 125, Chaumont, NY 13622

