



PLZ-24-23

City of Greensboro Planning Department Zoning Staff Report

City Council Hearing Date: September 24, 2024

GENERAL INFORMATION

APPLICANT	Robert Mason Schermerhorn on behalf of BMS Investment Properties, LLC
HEARING TYPE	Rezoning Request
REQUEST	R-7 (Residential Single-family – 7) to RM-18 (Residential Multi-family – 18)
CONDITIONS	N/A
LOCATION	632 North Elm Street
PARCEL ID NUMBER(S)	7864697593
PUBLIC NOTIFICATION	The notification area for this public hearing was 750 feet (Chapter 30-4-1.4 of the Land Development Ordinance requires notification of the owner of that parcel of land and the owners of all parcels of land adjoining and contiguous to that parcel of land as shown on the County tax listing). 144 notices were mailed to those property owners in the mailing area.
TRACT SIZE	0.25 Acres
TOPOGRAPHY	Flat
VEGETATION	Clear

SITE DATA

Existing Use

Quadplex

Adjacent Zoning

Adjacent Land Uses

N	RM-12 (Residential Multi-family – 12)	A tourist home and multi-family dwellings
E	R-5 (Residential Single-family – 7) and RM-12 (Residential Multi-family – 12)	Single-family dwellings
S	O (Office)	Single-family dwelling

W R-5 (Residential Single-family – 5) Fisher Park

Zoning History

Case #	Date	Request Summary
N/A	N/A	The subject property is currently zoned R-7 (Residential Single-family – 7). This has been the zoning on this property since the adoption of the Land Development Ordinance (LDO) in July 2010. Prior to the adoption of the LDO, this property was zoned RS-5 (Residential Single Family).

ZONING DISTRICT STANDARDS

District Summary *

Zoning District Designation:	Existing	Requested
	R-7	RM-18
Max. Density:	7 dwellings units/acre	18 dwelling units/acre
Typical Uses	Typical uses in the R-7 district include low-density single-family detached residential development	Typical uses in the RM-18 district include various residential uses with a maximum density of 18 dwelling units per acre.

**These regulations may not reflect all requirements for all situations; see the City of Greensboro Land Development Ordinance for all applicable regulations for site requirements for this zoning district.*

SPECIAL INFORMATION

Overlay District Ordinance/Historic Preservation

The subject site is located in the Central Business Overlay district and the North Elm Street Visual Corridor Overlay district.

The Central Business overlay district is intended to protect and preserve the appearance of gateways into the center city area and to promote traffic safety in areas that are especially congested with local traffic entering and leaving the central business district.

The North Elm Street Visual Corridor Overlay district is intended to protect and preserve the appearance of gateways into the city and to promote traffic safety in those areas of the city that are especially congested with traffic entering and leaving the city.

The subject site is:

- Located in the Fisher Park Historic District

The subject site is not:

- Designated as a Guilford County Landmark Property
- Recognized as a State of North Carolina Historic Site
- Listed in the National Register of Historic Places
- Located in a National Register Historic District

Environmental/Soils

Water Supply Watershed Site drains to North Buffalo Creek, Non-Watersupply Watershed Watershed

Floodplains N/A

Streams N/A

Other: Site is <1acre therefore site must meet Phase 2 requirements for Water Quantity Control for the entire site for a Multi-Family Development.

Utilities (Availability)

Water and sewer are available on North Elm Street. Private developer will need to extend water and sewer to City of Greensboro’s Water and Sewer Design Standards.

Airport Overlay District & Noise Cone

n/a

Landscaping & Tree Conservation Requirements

Street Yards:

Street planting yards must be installed abutting public street rights-of-way. The required street planting yard must have a minimum width of 10 feet (as measured from the outside edge of the right-of-way or the back of the sidewalk, whichever is further from the street centerline) and include at least 2 canopy trees and 17 shrubs per 100 linear feet of required street planting yard, not including allowed driveways.

Buffer Yards:

Adjacent to Single-family and Office uses: Type C buffer yard, with an average width of 15’, a minimum width of 10’, and a planting rate of 2 canopy trees, 3 understory trees, and 17 shrubs per 100 linear feet.

Parking Lots:

Trees for required parking spaces: 1 canopy tree per 12 spaces, in islands or medians within the parking lot.

On lots of record that existed prior to July 1, 1992 that are less than 55,000 square feet in area, no development is required to landscape more than 15% of the site.

Tree Conservation:

For 0.25 acres, 1% of parcel size to be dedicated in critical root zone for Tree Conservation.

Transportation

Street Classification: North Elm Street – Major Thoroughfare.
Sout Park Drive – Local Street.

Site Access: All access(es) must be designed and constructed to the City of Greensboro standards.

- Traffic Counts: North Elm Street AADT = 13,500 (NCDOT, 2019).
- Trip Generation: N/A.
- Sidewalks: Sidewalks are a requirement of the Development Ordinance and shall be installed per the Streets Design Standards Manual. Sidewalk does currently exist along the frontage of this property.
- Transit in Vicinity: Yes, GTA Route 3 (North Elm Street) is adjacent to the subject site, along North Elm Street.
- Traffic Impact Study: No TIS required per TIS Ordinance.
(TIS)
- Street Connectivity: N/A.
- Other: N/A.

IMPACT/POLICY ANALYSIS

Land Use Compatibility

The proposed **RM-18 (Residential Multi-family – 18)** zoning district would allow land uses that are compatible with the general character of the area.

GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan Policies

The **GSO2040** plan designates this location as **Residential**. The requested **RM-18 (Residential Multi-family – 18)** zoning district would allow uses that are generally supportive of those described in the **Residential** future land use designation. The **GSO2040** Future Built Form Map designates this location as the **Urban Central** place type, and the parcel is in an **Urban Mixed Use Corridor**.

GSO2040 Written Policies

Building Community Connections – Greensboro is unique and memorable based on our quality of life, culture, arts and places and the ties that bind us together as a community.

Goal E – Everyone does their part to maintain stable, attractive, and healthy places to live and raise families.

Strategy 1 – Build upon successful community initiatives to improve housing conditions while encouraging community involvement and participation. Work to ensure the quality, quantity, and diversity of housing choices across and between neighborhoods.

Creating Great Places – Creating interesting and attractive places and vibrant public spaces in neighborhoods, across Greensboro, in downtown and with our historic resources.

Goal A – Greensboro’s citywide network of unique neighborhoods offer residents of all walks of life a variety of quality housing choices.

Strategy 2 – Meet housing needs and desires with a sufficient and diverse supply of housing products, prices and locations.

Provision of Missing Middle Housing--The term “Missing Middle Housing” refers to dwelling types that span the middle ground between detached single-family homes and mid-rise apartment buildings. Examples include duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes; courtyard apartments; bungalow courts; townhouses; multiplexes; live-work units; and accessory units, sometimes referred to as “granny flats.” Zoning codes in many cities, including Greensboro, and the financing restrictions of many lending institutions have led to limited construction of these traditional housing types over the past 75 years. Missing Middle Housing can affectively supply dwelling units that appeal both to affluent buyers, young professionals and meet the needs of low-income households with fewer options.

GSO2040 Map Policies

Future Land Use Map

Future Land Uses: Broad areas based on the main character of land uses that we want to see in the future. These are not intended to be exclusive; it is assumed that there are a variety of uses in each area, but the designation reflects the area’s predominant character.

Residential: Includes both single-and multi-family residential. Other uses should generally be in the scale of a Neighborhood- or a District- Scaled Activity Center as described in the Future Built Form Map, in a form that is appropriate to the character of the area. Many residential areas include commercial corridors, and future development along these corridors should be oriented to the corridor to avoid negative impacts to adjacent residences.

Future Built Form Map

Place Types: Areas that have a consistency of character, identity or purpose and that are most often bounded by corridors, natural features, or parks that create transition or separation from other neighborhoods that may not share the same characteristics.

Urban Central should reflect these characteristics:

1. Development is consistent with adopted neighborhood plans and their design guidelines.
2. New development should be compatible with the existing development pattern, as described in the “Existing Built Form” section: Short blocks and a grid-based street pattern;
 - Fine-grained zoning designations with a wide variety of uses are found closer to each other;
 - A range of residential building types, from detached, single-family houses, to Missing Middle Housing, to mid-rise multi-family in close proximity to each other; and high-rise multi-family in Activity Centers and along Mixed-Use Corridors;
 - Buildings on lots that are close to the width of a residential lot, rather than a uniform building along the entire block face;
 - Buildings close to each other and to the street; and
 - Connected sidewalks that form a walkable network.
3. There is benefit from and support from the viability of public open spaces, plazas, public art, and cultural resources.
4. Safety and crime prevention is integrated into building and site design by orienting windows and doorways to streets overlooking semi-public and shared spaces. Parking is oriented behind buildings, so buildings are built to the street with unobstructed windows for visual surveillance on the sidewalk and street.
5. Front doors and porches build community and neighborhood vitality and encourage neighbor interaction.

- 6. Exterior building materials are durable, sustainable, and contribute to the unique character of the surrounding buildings and existing neighborhood.
- 7. Equitable and ample access to walking, bicycling, transit and ride sharing is provided.

Corridors: Corridors are the linear commercial and office developments typically along collector or arterial roadways. They include properties directly fronting on the road and may include properties having primary access to or in immediate proximity to the road. The character and function of the road and the uses within a corridor are highly correlated.

Urban (Mixed-Use) Corridors reflect these additional characteristics:

- 1. Consistency with adopted corridor plans.
- 2. Cross easements are provided for vehicular and pedestrian access.
- 3. They meet the existing need and convenience of the surrounding community.
- 4. Visual clutter and confusion caused by sign proliferation is minimized while maintaining safe and efficient wayfinding for both pedestrians and vehicles.
- 5. Landscaping, sidewalks, lighting, fencing, and building features are located so as to guide pedestrian movement on or through the site. On-site and on-building lighting at entrances and along walkways is maintained at safe lighting levels.

CONFORMITY WITH OTHER PLANS

City Plans

Sustainability Action Plan

Element 1) Transportation and Land Use:

Policy 1) Encourage increased density, a mix of land uses and more integrated links between transportation and land use through changes to Greensboro’s Comprehensive Plan, Development Ordinance and other related plans.

Other Plans

N/A

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Community Outreach

Applicant is strongly encouraged to discuss this proposed rezoning and development with owners of surrounding properties.

Staff Analysis

The subject property is approximately 0.25 acres and currently contains a nonconforming quadplex, zoned R-7. North of the request contains multi-family dwellings, zoned RM-12 (Residential Multi-family – 12). East and south of the request contain single-family dwellings, zoned R-7 and RM-12; and O (Office) respectively. West of the request is Fisher Park, zoned R-5.

The proposed rezoning request supports the Comprehensive Plan’s Filling in Our Framework goal strategy to provide missing middle housing and to affectively supply dwelling units that appeal to affluent buyers, young professionals and meet the needs of low-income households with fewer options. The request also supports the Comprehensive Plan’s Creating Great Places strategy to meet housing needs and desires with a sufficient and diverse supply of housing products, prices and locations. The subject property is located in the Fisher Park Historic District.

Since the subject property is located in the Fisher Park Historic District. The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the rezoning request on July 24, 2024 and recommended approval by a vote of 5-2. Comments considered by the Commission in making their recommendation included concerns regarding the rezoning request’s potential to detract from the character of the historic district and possible impacts on missing middle housing stock availability.

The Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map designates this property as Residential. The Residential designation includes both single and multi-family residential. Other uses should generally be in the scale of a Neighborhood or District Scaled Activity Center as described in the Future Built Form Map, in a form that is appropriate to the character of the area. Many residential areas include commercial corridors, and future development along these corridors should be oriented to the corridor to avoid negative impacts to adjacent residences.

The Comprehensive Plan’s Future Built Form Map currently designates this property as Urban Central. Applicable characteristics of the **Urban Central** classification include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Development is consistent with adopted neighborhood plans and their design guidelines.
2. New development should be compatible with the existing development pattern, as described in the “Existing Built Form” section: Short blocks and a grid-based street pattern;
 - Fine-grained zoning designations with a wide variety of uses are found closer to each other;
 - A range of residential building types, from detached, single-family houses, to Missing Middle Housing, to mid-rise multi-family in close proximity to each other; and high-rise multi-family in Activity Centers and along Mixed-Use Corridors;
 - Buildings on lots that are close to the width of a residential lot, rather than a uniform building along the entire block face;
 - Buildings close to each other and to the street; and
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3. There is benefit from and support from the viability of public open spaces, plazas, public art, and cultural resources.
4. Safety and crime prevention is integrated into building and site design by orienting windows and doorways to streets overlooking semi-public and shared spaces. Parking is oriented behind buildings, so buildings are built to the street with unobstructed windows for visual surveillance on the sidewalk and street.
5. Front doors and porches build community and neighborhood vitality and encourage neighbor interaction.
6. Exterior building materials are durable, sustainable, and contribute to the unique character of the surrounding buildings and existing neighborhood.
7. Equitable and ample access to walking, bicycling, transit and ride sharing is provided.

The Comprehensive Plan’s Future Built Form Map also designates this property as being within an Urban (Mixed-Use) Corridor. The **Urban (Mixed-Use) Corridor** reflect the following additional characteristics:

1. Consistency with adopted corridor plans.
2. Cross easements are provided for vehicular and pedestrian access.

3. They meet the existing need and convenience of the surrounding community.
4. Visual clutter and confusion caused by sign proliferation is minimized while maintaining safe and efficient wayfinding for both pedestrians and vehicles.
5. Landscaping, sidewalks, lighting, fencing, and building features are located so as to guide pedestrian movement on or through the site. On-site and on-building lighting at entrances and along walkways is maintained at safe lighting levels.

The proposed RM-18 zoning district would allow land uses that are compatible with the general character of the area. This request would also permit an existing nonconforming use to become conforming.

This request is consistent with the intent and purpose of the zoning code, the Comprehensive Plan (GSO2040) and the Fisher Park City of Greensboro Historic District. This request is generally compatible with the existing development and trends in the surrounding area.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends **approval** of the requested **RM-18 (Conditional District - Residential Multi-family – 18)** zoning district.