



**Staff Report**  
**General Development Plan/Group Development**  
**Aldermanic District: 4**  
**County Commission District: 1**  
**MPC File No. P-120517-54534-2**  
**June 5, 2012**

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**Savannah Lofts**  
**120 East 61<sup>st</sup> Street**  
**R-M-25 Zoning District**  
**1.65 Acres**  
**PIN 2-0106-04-002 and 003**  
**KRI Engineering, Engineer**  
**Cliff Kennedy, Agent**  
**Cathryn Dunn, Owner**  
**Chance Partners, Bill Newell, Developer**

**Gary Plumbley, MPC Project Planner**

**Report Status: Initial Report**

**Nature of Request**

The petitioner is requesting approval of a General Development Plan/Group Development for a proposed multi-family residential development to be located at the southeast corner of Abercorn Street and East 61<sup>st</sup> Street within an R-M-25 (Planned Residential Multi-Family Residential – 25 units per net acre) zoning district. The petitioner is also requesting the following variance:

A 5 foot building setback variance from the required 25 foot building setback along East 61<sup>st</sup> Street.

**Findings**

1. **Notification:** A courtesy notice was sent to all property owners located within 200 feet of the subject site on Tuesday May 29<sup>th</sup>. The petitioner also held a neighborhood meeting with the nearby residents on Thursday, May 31<sup>st</sup> at the MPC offices.
2. **Site:** The subject site is 1.65 acres in size and is located at the southeast corner of Abercorn Street and East 61<sup>st</sup> Street. The site was previously occupied by eight attached or semi-attached multi-family residential structures. The improvements on the site were razed in 2007. The site is vacant and has some mature canopy trees. Some of these trees will be preserved. The adjacent land uses and zoning districts include:



<u>Location</u>	<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Zoning</u>
North	East 60 <sup>th</sup> Lane Single Family Residential	R-6 [1]
South	East 60 <sup>th</sup> Street Multi-Family Residential	R-M-25
East	City Pump Station Convenience Store/Gas Station	B-N [2] B-N
West	Abercorn Street Single Family Residential	R-6

[1] R-6 – Single Family Residential – 6 units per net acre

[2] B-N – Neighborhood Business

3. **Proposed Use:** The petitioner is proposing to construct 32 multi-family residential apartment units. The density of the proposed development will be 24.62 units per net acre which is permitted within an R-M-25 zoning district.
4. **Buildings:** The proposed multi-family development will consist of three freestanding buildings. The southernmost structure located along East 61<sup>st</sup> Street will contain 13 apartments and will be 260 feet in width. The northernmost building located along East 60<sup>th</sup> Lane will contain 14 apartments and will be 280 feet in width. The westernmost structure near Abercorn Street will contain 5 apartments and will be 100 feet in width. All of the proposed structures will have a depth of 37 feet and will be three stories in height. The proposed apartments will be an unspecified mix of three and four bedroom units.

A rendering of the proposed building elevation has been submitted. The buildings will be three stories in height. The style of the proposed structures will be Neo Colonial Revival. The exterior treatment of the buildings will be varied and will include brick veneer, stucco, and cement based siding. The roofs will be a gable style with architectural shingles and standing seam metal on the covered stoops and balconies. The windows will be typical 6 over 6 with insulated glass.

5. **Ingress/Egress:** The site will have frontage on Abercorn Street and East 61<sup>st</sup> Street as well as on East 60<sup>th</sup> Lane. However, access to the site will be restricted to East 61<sup>st</sup> Street. The petitioner is proposing two bi-directional curb cuts on East 61<sup>st</sup> Street. The westernmost curb cut will be located approximately 140 feet from Abercorn Street and the easternmost curb cut will be located approximately 315 feet from the westernmost curb cut.

Access to the residential apartments will be provided by a proposed access drive 26 feet in width. The access drive will extend from both curb cuts and loop between the largest two buildings parallel to East 61<sup>st</sup> Street. The westernmost portion of the access drive will also extend to the proposed dumpster pad adjacent to 60<sup>th</sup> Lane.



- 6. Parking:** The required parking for this development is 64 spaces based on the requirement of two spaces for each of 32 residential units. Each of the proposed residential units will have a two-car garage on the ground floor of the apartment unit.

The proposed development will also have 3 handicapped off-street spaces on the eastern portion of the site.

The petitioner is also proposing to provide 12 parallel spaces within the existing 66 foot right-of-way of East 61<sup>st</sup> Street. The spaces, if approved, would be available as public parking and not specifically for the proposed development. The City of Savannah, at the recommendation of the City Traffic Engineer, adopted the north side of East 61<sup>st</sup> Street as a no-parking zone. Also, there are existing light standards which would be impacted by the proposed on-street parking spaces. Both of these issues must be resolved as a condition of approval for the Specific Development Plan.

- 7. Traffic Generation:** Approximately 213 vehicle trips per day will be generated by the proposed 32 unit apartment complex. The resulting peak hour generation will be approximately 20 trips which is below the 100 trip threshold necessary to require a traffic impact analysis.
- 8. Trash:** The proposed development will have a dumpster pad located on the northwestern portion of the site adjacent to East 60<sup>th</sup> Lane. The dumpster pad will be served by the 26 foot access drive.
- 9. Mail:** The petitioner has stated that the mail delivery system will be determined by the Post Office and will probably be a mail kiosk. The location of the kiosk, if applicable, will be a condition of approval of a Specific Development Plan.
- 10. Greenspace:** The required greenspace for this development is 0.33 acres based on the minimum requirement of 20 percent of the 1.65 acre site. The proposed development will have 0.726 acres of greenspace which is 44 percent of the total site area.
- 11. Water, Sewer, and Public Services:** The proposed development will be provided water and sanitary sewer by the City of Savannah. The site is served by the Chatham County Metropolitan Police Department, the City of Savannah Fire Department. The site is also served by the Chatham Area Transit Authority, bus route Number 14. The nearest bus stop is at the intersection of Abercorn Street and East 61<sup>st</sup> Street.
- 12. Drainage:** Drainage plans have not been submitted and are not required in conjunction with a General Developer Plan. However, the petitioner's engineer has stated that the stormwater created by this development will be accommodated by underground detention. A Drainage Plan will be required as part of a Specific Development Plan.



13. **Buffers:** The site abuts a public street right-of-way on the west and south, a public lane right-of-way on the north, and a City pump station and a convenience store on the east. Because of this, a buffer is not required for this development. However, the proposed development will have: a 20 foot setback adjacent to the west side of the pump station; a 25 foot setback adjacent to the convenience store, East 60<sup>th</sup> Lane, and East 61<sup>st</sup> Street; and, a 75 foot setback adjacent to Abercorn Street. Some of the existing trees located within these setbacks which will be saved. Also, staff will work with the petitioner to provide suitable vegetation within the setbacks as well as other portions of the site in conjunction with a Specific Development Plan.
14. **Variance:** The petitioner is requesting a 5 foot building setback variance from the required 25 foot building setback along East 61<sup>st</sup> Street.

The Savannah Zoning Ordinance, Section 8-3031, provides that variances from the requirements of the development standards within a Planned zoning district may be approved by the Metropolitan Planning Commission at the request of the developer on a finding that such variances:

- (1) would be in keeping with the overall character of the area.
- (2) would not be contrary to the process and intent of these regulations.
- (3) would not be detrimental to existing or proposed surrounding uses.
- (4) would serve public purposes to a degree equal to or greater than the standards replaced.

The petitioner is requesting a 5 foot building setback variance in order to provide a covered stoop or upstairs balcony on some of the units within the building facing East 61<sup>st</sup> Street. The proposed residential developed can be constructed without the stoops and balconies which would eliminate the need for a 5 foot setback variance. However, approval of the variance to accommodate the stoops and balconies will offer a benefit to the occupants but more importantly, will create a more aesthetically pleasing structure that provides character typically found in a more urban setting.

15. The proposed Group Development/General Development Plan and requested building setback variance, if approved, would not be detrimental to the property owners in the general area or to the City of Savannah.

**Recommendation:**

The MPC staff recommends **approval** of a 5 foot front yard building setback variance from the required 25 feet along East 61<sup>st</sup> Street and the proposed General Development Plan/Group Development subject to the following conditions:

1. Revise the General Development Plan to split each of the two longest buildings to minimize the impact of the mass of the residential structures. The separation



should be not less than 15 feet and established as greenspace. This condition will be subject to a determination by the City Landscape Architect that moving the development 15 feet closer to Abercorn Street will not jeopardize the existing Live Oak trees near Abercorn Street.

2. Approval by the Mayor and Alderman to delete the no on-street parking designation of the north side of East 61<sup>st</sup> Street and the acceptable relocation of the affected light standards by the City Traffic Engineer. In absence of this, the proposed on-street parking shall be eliminated from the proposed General Development Plan.
3. The existing address of the site is 4634 Abercorn Street which is incorrect. The correct address of this site is 120 East 61<sup>st</sup> Street. Please use this address for all future submittals.
4. Approval by the City of Savannah review departments including the City Landscape Architect, the City Traffic Engineer, and the City Engineer.