



THE CITY OF KEY WEST
PLANNING BOARD
Staff Report

To: Chair and Planning Board Members

Through: Katie P. Halloran, Planning Director

From: Ben Gagnon, Planner II

Meeting Date: July 17th, 2025

Agenda Item: **Minor Development Plan – 601 Howard England Way (RE# 00001630-000100)** – A request for a Minor Development Plan with landscape waivers to demolish and reconstruct a new, larger visitor center at Fort Zachary Taylor State Park located in the Historic Public and Semipublic Services (HPS) zoning district, pursuant to Sections 108-91 and 108-517 of the Land Development Regulations of the City of Key West, Florida.

Request: The applicant proposes to demolish an existing restroom structure- and rebuild it to include a larger visitor center and vending machine space.

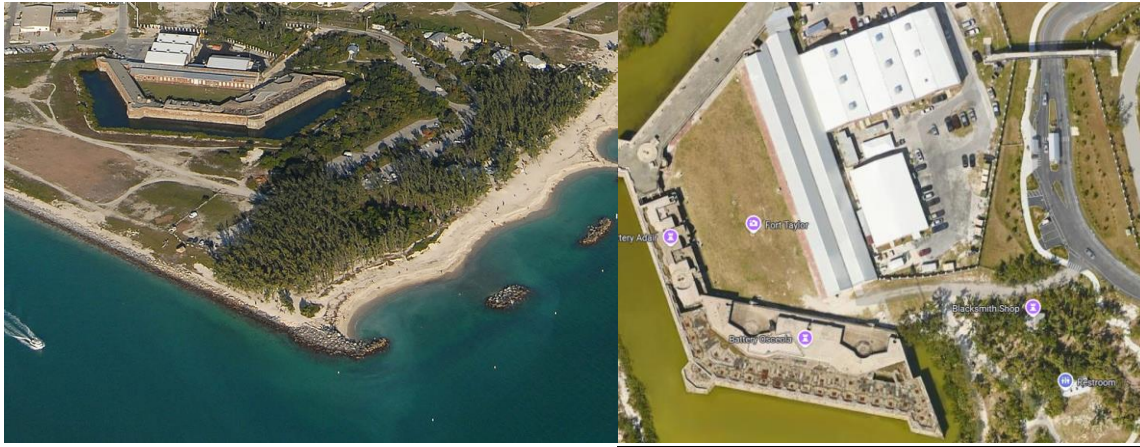
Owner: State of Florida C/O Dep Division of State Lands

Applicant: Spottswood, Spottswood, Spottswood & Sterling PLL

Location: 601 Howard England Way (RE# 00001630-000200)

Zoning: Historic Public Services (HPS)

SITE MAP



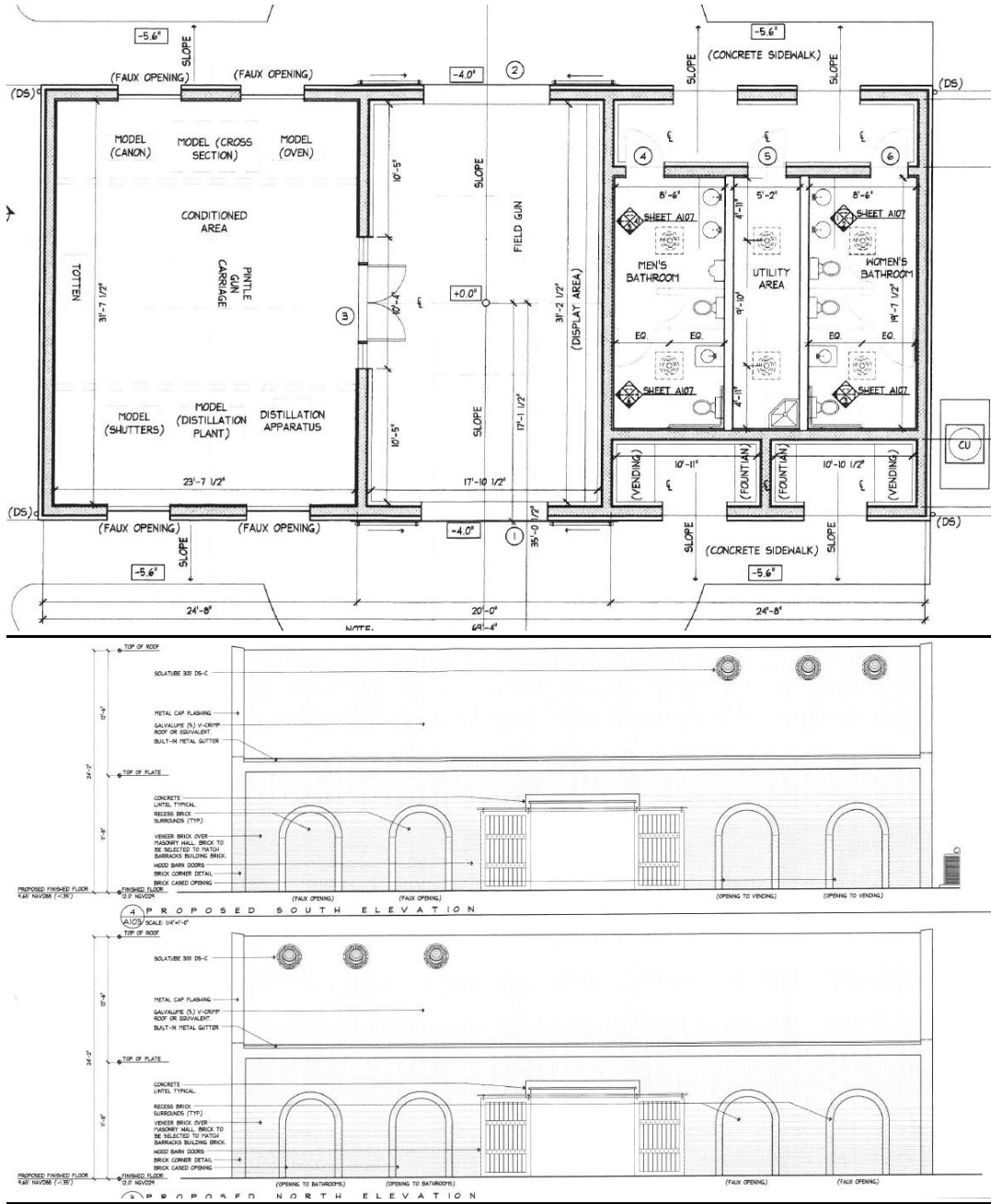
BACKGROUND:

The subject property is a 406,169 square-foot parcel located at 601 Howard England Way in the Historic Public Services (HPS) zoning district. The principal use is a Florida State Park known as Fort Zachary Taylor. The site includes a beach, historic fort, walking trails, a restaurant and retail structure with bathrooms, and a smaller structure with bathrooms which is the structure in question for the development plan.

REQUEST:

The applicant proposes to demolish the current building that houses the bathrooms towards the entrance of the park and reconstruct a larger building to include a visitor center along with bathrooms. The center will be open for visitors to both the beach and the fort. The proposed structure will be 1,468 square feet larger than the existing building. City of Key West Code Section 108-91 requires a minor development plan in the historic district when there is an addition or reconstruction of 500-2,499 square feet of gross non-residential floor area.

SITE PLAN



SITE DATA

The site data table for the proposed development is shown below; the site is so large, at over nine acres, that setbacks are not of concern and coverages are not close to thresholds. Current setbacks are all 100' from any lot line for the proposed bathroom and visitor center. Ample parking is provided on site including a recently paved lot and an overflow lot when necessary for events such as the power boat races. An additional 1,468 sf structure would require 10 additional parking spaces, and the property can currently accommodate this requirement with existing onsite parking.

	REQUIRED	EXISTING	PROPOSED
ZONE	HPS		
FEMA	8'	12'7"	12'0"
BUILDING COVERAGE	40% (162,467 SF)	8,677 SF	10,145 SF
IMPERVIOUS	50% (203,084)	37,948 SF	39,416 SF
HEIGHT	25'	18'	24'-2"
SETBACKS NOT APPLICABLE DUE TO SIZE OF SITE AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE			

SURROUNDING ZONING AND USES:

North: Military (M)
South: Atlantic Ocean
East: Military (M)
West: Atlantic Ocean

PROCESS:

Development Review Committee: April 24th, 2025
Tree Commission: May 20th, 2025
Planning Board: July 17th, 2025
HARC: TBD
Tree Commission: TBD
City Commission: TBD
Local Appeal Period: 10 days
DEO Review: Up to 45 days

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE:

This application appeared at the April 24, 2025, Development Review Committee. Staff established that there are no major concerns.

LANDSCAPING (Code Chapter 108 Article VI)

The City of Key West Tree Commission considered the application for conceptual landscape plan approval at the May 20th meeting. The Commission approved the landscape plan to remove 2 Gumbo Limbos, 1 Silver Buttonwood, 1 Seagrape, and 1 Coconut Palm with the following conditions:

1. Mitigation plan for the final landscape plan shall include the entire 73.1 Caliper inch requirement, and
2. The plan shall be revised to meet the code requirement of only 25% of plantings be palms.

Updated landscape plans were submitted dated June 9th 2025 satisfying both conditions. The plan proposes just 2 palms out of a total of 10 trees, for a palm percentage of 20%. The need for further landscape waivers were not identified by the Urban Forester.

PLANT SCHEDULE							
SYMBOL	CODE	QTY	BOTANICAL / COMMON NAME	CONTAINER	SIZE	NATIVE/NON-NATIVE	
TREES							
	BS	4	BURSERA SIMARUBA / GUMBO LIMBO	45 GAL.	4" DBH., 12'-14' HT.	NATIVE	
	MF	4	MYRCIANTHES FRAGRANS / SIMPSON'S STOPPER	45 GAL.	2" CAL., 10'-12' HT.	NATIVE	
	TR	2	THRINAX RADIATA / FLORIDA THATCH PALM	F.G.	SEE PLAN FOR CT	NATIVE	
SYMBOL	CODE	QTY	BOTANICAL / COMMON NAME	CONTAINER	SIZE		SPACING
SHRUB AREAS							
	MC2	60	MUHLENBERGIA CAPILLARIS / PINK MUHLY GRASS	3 GAL.	20"-24" HT., FULL		24" o.c.
	SR2	22	SERENOA REPENS / SAW PALMETTO	3 GAL.	12" - 14" HT, FULL		36" o.c.
	ZI2	190	ZAMIA INTEGRIFOLIA / COONTIE	3 GAL.	1'-1.5' HT, 1'-1.5' SPRD		24" o.c.

CONCURRENCY FACILITIES AND OTHER UTILITIES OR SERVICES (CITY CODE SECTION 108-233)

Comprehensive Plan Objective 9-1.5 directs the City to ensure that public facilities and services needed to support development are available concurrent with the impacts of new development.

There are no anticipated impacts created by the proposed scope of work. The bathrooms are existing and the reconstruction will be in the same location to use existing sanitary sewer facilities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Staff have received no public comments as of June 10th, 2025. The applicant has not provided any letters in support or against the project as of June 10th 2025, however there are just two neighbors in the noticing vicinity. The US Navy Base, and the Division of State Lands.

RECOMMENDATION:

The project proposes onsite improvements to a very popular attraction in Key West. The improvements will offer visitors a more spacious bathroom and the proposed new visitors' center will provide information on the fort while allowing visitors a break from the sun.

As per Sec. 108-94. - Review by staff. - "Each application for development plan approval shall be reviewed by the city planner and transmitted to the development review committee and other staff as may be designated by the city planner based upon the type of development proposed. The city planner shall review each application for compliance with land development regulations."

The Planning Department, based on the criteria established by the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Regulations, recommends to the Planning Board that the request for Minor Development Plan be **APPROVED** with the conditions listed below.

1. The proposed development shall be consistent with the plans dated February 18th 2025 by Bender & Associates, the landscape plans dated June 9th 2025 by Keith Oropeza; notwithstanding any revisions requested and recommended by staff. Construction drawings for permitting shall be dated as approved herein, with any proposed revisions (modifications) clearly noted. Development plan modifications that do not rise to the status of minor or major plan modifications may be approved by the city planner as per Section 108-91(c)(1). All modifications shall be submitted for review and approval to the Planning Department prior to building permit application. Minor and major development plan modifications are addressed pursuant to Section 108(c) of the City Code.
2. Final landscape plan approval is required from the Tree Commission or the Urban Forestry Manager prior to placement on the City Commission agenda.