

STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 5, 2021 updated January 7 and 11, 2021

RE: **1316 Royal Street-1319 William Street**
(TP2020-00008 Conceptual Landscape Code Review)

FROM: Karen DeMaria, City of Key West Urban Forestry Manager

An application was submitted to the Tree Commission for Conceptual Landscape Plan approval with tree removal for a major development plan to create six single family residences and the redevelopment of an existing structure into two residences. This review is to verify compliance to Sec 108 of the City Code regarding landscaping and buffer requirements for review and comment by the Tree Commission to help the Planning Board with their review. This review is based on the site and landscape plan submitted to the Tree Commission dated December 28, 2020.

Review of Section 108:

1. **Sec 108-346:** A minimum of 35% open space is required. The plan proposes a 36% open space.

Part (d) of this section states that "the natural landscape of the site shall be preserved as much as possible for purposes of enhancing the general appearance of the site as well as to prevent excessive stormwater runoff, erosion, siltation and dust." The applicant has requested the removal of a large number of regulated trees and palms. The Tree Commission will vote on this request at their meeting on January 5, 2021.

2. **Sec 108-347:** (a) The development plan applicant and successors in ownership shall maintain the bufferyard and landscape screening in perpetuity. The city may require more restrictive buffers to mitigate adverse impacts due to high impact development.

The property owner has stated that he is responsible for the maintenance of the landscaping and the HOA will have the right to step in if property not maintained.

The City has determined that a more restrictive buffer requirement is needed along the western side of the property due to the plans showing the backyard that includes decks and pools of at least two homes abutting the neighboring property (see below).

(b) Bufferyards: The property is considered a single family development.

- A. Southeast Side Buffer Yard: this area is adjacent to multifamily properties therefore this is a "B" bufferyard which requires 40 plant units per 100 linear feet. This bufferyard landscape area is proposed to be 5 feet wide therefore a total of 71 plant units for the 178 linear feet of property line area is required (does not include the 22 feet of property required for street buffer for William and Royal Street areas).

A total of 201 plant units (existing and new plants) are proposed for this area therefore, the plant unit count complies with this section of code.

- 20 points Existing canopy trees* (1-Gumbo Limbo #141 and 1-Royal Poinciana #139)
- 95 points Ornamental/Subcanopy trees and palms (1-new Geiger, 1-existing Jamaican Caper #11, 1-transplanted Thatch palm #181, and 16-new Simpson Stoppers)
- 86 points Shrubs (48-Cocoplum and 38-Coontie)

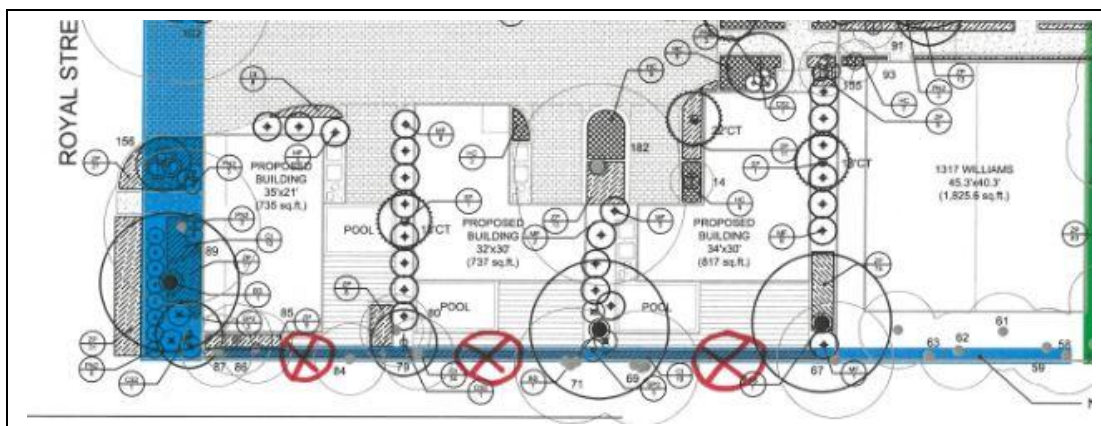
*existing trees shown on plans as being mostly on neighboring property or very close to property line were not included in the counts.

B. Northwest side planting: this area is adjacent to a single family zoning area. This bufferyard does not require the planting of any plant units however the proposed plan places at least two structures with their "backyard" areas including pools and decks immediately adjoining the property lines. Therefore, as per this section of code and **Sec 108-351**, due to the increase in potential noise and light issues, buffer plantings are required. Since three pool/deck areas are within this review, a multifamily buffer "B" bufferyard is being required which requires 45 plant units per 100 linear feet. This bufferyard landscape area is proposed to be 2.5 feet wide therefore a total of 80 plant units for the 178 linear feet of property line area is required (does not include the 22 feet of property required for street buffer for William and Royal Street areas).

A total of 99 plant units (existing and new plants) are proposed for this area.

- 40 points Existing canopy trees (3-Pink Tabebuia trees #58, #62, & #67 and 1-Gumbo Limbo #86)
- 25 points Ornamental/Subcanopy trees and palms (2-existing palms #61 & #63, 1-existing Jamaican Caper #87, 1-existing Satinleaf #85, and 1-new Simpson Stopper)
- 54 points Shrubs (53-Cocoplum and 1-Spartina)

The vegetation proposed to be planted in the area where the potential deck and pool impacts will occur are shrubs that tend to be maintained at less than 5 ft tall. There are a few areas where taller shrubs or subcanopy trees should be planted to help buffer noise and light to the adjacent property. Is an opaque fence being installed along this property line?



3. **Sec 108-348:** Allows for credit for existing plant material and states that the clearing of native vegetation sufficient to create the required landscape screening or portion thereof is prohibited without approval from the city.

The Tree Commission reviews and approves the removal of any regulated trees and palms from properties. The applicant has requested the removal of 42 regulated trees and 7 palms. If approved, the total required mitigation replacements that are to be planted on the property and incorporated into the landscape plan is 248.3 caliper inches of approved trees, minimum 5 ft tall and 7 approved palms, a minimum of 4 feet tall each palm.

The submitted landscape plan proposes to plant 9-gumbo limbo trees each 4 caliper inches (total 144 inches credit), 6-Geiger trees each at 2.5 caliper inches (total 15 inches credit), 3-Satinleaf trees at 2 caliper inches (total 12 inches credit), and 42-Simpsons Stoppers at 2 caliper inches (total of 168 inches credit) for a total of 339 caliper inches and 6-Sabal Palms (18 to 22 feet tall). Therefore, the proposed landscape plan does meet the requirement of the potential tree removal permit.

4. **Sec 108-412,** Minimum landscape requirements: This section of the code requires that at least 20% of the site is landscaped (trees, shrubs, and groundcover). The project is planning 32% landscaped area.

The project proposes 100% native vegetation. The property owner has stated that he will be responsible for the maintenance of the landscaping but the HOA will have the right to step in if it is not maintained. A condition should be included with the development plan that reiterates that requirement of landscape maintenance in the short term for survivability and in perpetuity as per the city code (Sec 108-412 and 482).

5. **Sec 108-413,** landscape requirement along street frontages: The property is 0.52 acres (200 ft x 115 ft) and this section of the code requires 80 plant units per 100 linear ft in a 20 ft wide landscape area. Grass and/or groundcover is required. Plans indicate that the Royal Street and William Street property line areas would be street frontage. These areas are 115 liner feet therefore, 92 plants units are required for each area.

- A. Royal Street: The submitted landscape plan proposes to create a 10 ft wide landscape area with a total of 154 plant units* (existing and new plants) proposed for this area:

30 points	Existing canopy trees (3-Royal Poincianas #89, #102, & #108)
15 points	Ornamental/Subcanopy trees and palms (3-existing palms being transplanted into this area #156, #113, & #116, 1-new Geiger, and 1-new Simpsons Stopper tree)
109 points	Shrubs (32-Wild Coffee, 63-Cocoplum, 3-Spartina plants, and 11-Coontie plants)

*Please note that 174 total plant units of Coontie, a groundcover/shrubby type plant species, are proposed to also be planted in this area with some being

planted on the city right of way. These plant units were not counted toward the total unit count.

The proposed plan meets the requirements for plant units. A waiver has been requested to reduce the width of the required landscape area from 20 ft to 10 ft.

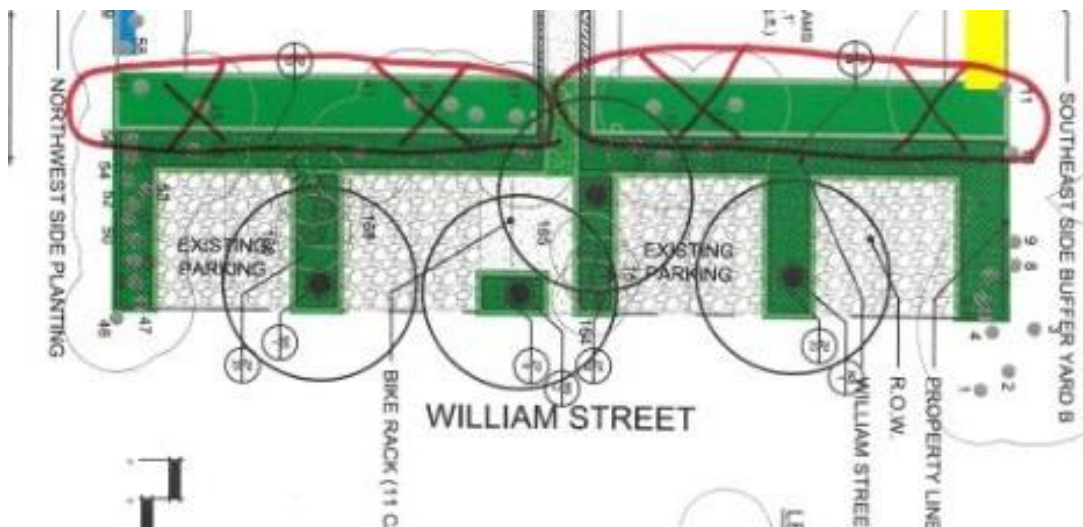
B. William Street: The submitted landscape plan proposes to have a 12 ft wide landscape area. This area is currently a small existing planted area with shrub type plants (native and non native) and a sidewalk immediately adjacent a head in parking area from the street. A portion of this area contains the second floor overhang from the existing building. The plan proposes some new plantings in this area (coontie). The plans do not indicate what groundcover will be planted under the overhang area. A total of 164 existing plant units are located within this area.

30 points Existing canopy trees (3-Pink Tabebuia trees #55, #56, & #57)

5 points Ornamental/Subcanopy trees & palms
(2-existing palms, #18 & #41)

129 points Shrubs (9-existing shrubs, #16, #17, #19, #20, #37, #38, #40, #44, & #45 and 120-new coontie plants)

The submitted landscape plan does not meet code requirements for this section. The width of the planting area is less than the required 20 feet and no grass or groundcover is proposed to be installed in the buffer area located under the overhang of the building. The applicant has submitted a waiver request for this section of the code regarding the required width of the planting area. Additional grass or groundcover must be added to the plan for that area under the overhang.



It should be noted that this area is immediately adjacent to an existing parking lot. Plans indicate improvements to the parking area to include the creation of three new vegetative islands.

6. Sec 108-414 Interior parking areas: Review not required-single family residential parking.

7. Sec 108-415 perimeter parking areas: The William Street perimeter area is an existing head in parking area off the street that will be redeveloped to create 8 vehicle parking areas and a bicycle parking area for single family residences. Therefore, this project is not required to follow the standard perimeter landscaping width requirements for this section of the code.

There are existing trees along the property lines with the adjacent properties that are to remain. Four new vegetative island areas are proposed to be created in the existing parking area. Part B of this code section states that 1 tree and 10 shrubs are supposed to be planted for every 35 linear feet in perimeter parking areas. Four new Gumbo Limbo trees and 118-Coontie groundcover/shrub plants are proposed to be planted and 1-Christmas Palm (#18) and 4-Thatch Palms, each around 5 ft tall OA (#164, #167, #168, & #166) are to be transplanted into this area.

8. Sec 108-416, interior area landscaping. This section of code specifically looks at the planting of trees and requires that all areas not covered by buildings or hardscape will have grass, groundcover, shrubs or other landscaping materials. The landscape plan proposes to place a mixture of grass, groundcover, mulch, and gravel.

The definition of "tree" in this section of code states a "self-supporting, wood plant of a species which normally at maturity has a trunk with a diameter of at least 2.5-3 inches measured at standard height and has an overall height of a minimum of 15 feet."

Approximately 7,311 square feet of property or 32% of the site is not covered by buildings, etc. Therefore, the interior landscape area requires a total of 11.6 trees be planted. The plan proposes to plant 4-Gumbo Limbo trees and 4-Geiger trees, a slow growing, sub canopy tree species that can grow to an eventual height of 30 ft tall (IFAS pub #ENH341), for a total of 8 trees. **Therefore, the proposed landscape plan does not comply with this section of the code.**

It should be noted that one existing lignum vitae tree will be preserved and protected in the interior landscape area.

9. Sec 108-447, protection of landscaping: Representatives for the applicant have stated that wheel stops are noted on the civil plans for the William Street parking area and a tree protection plan has been submitted.
10. Sec 108-448: See comments in in #8B, Sec 108-413. **Groundcover or grass is needed in the landscape area under the building overhang along William Street.**
11. Sec 108-450: The large parking area off William Street is an existing head in parking area that abuts a landscape bufferyard area adjacent to two existing structures. According to representatives for the property owners, **a waiver is being requested for the requirement of perimeter screening along the entire parking area.** They are proposing to lessen the intensity of the parking area by proposing modifications to include landscape islands.

12. **Sec 108-481:** Palms shall constitute no more than 25 percent of total tree requirements for any section in this article. No other tree species shall account for more than 50 percent of the total number of trees. The proposed plan states a 25% use of palms in the landscaping. Only one species of tree is being proposed to be planted in the new landscaping, Gumbo Limbo trees. Three species of subcanopy/ornamental trees are being proposed to be planted, Satinleaf and Geiger trees and tall, shrubby Simpson Stoppers.

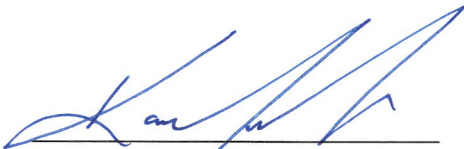
The landscape plan indicates a size range for the proposed shrub plantings of 18" to 24". Code requirements states that all planted shrubs shall be a minimum of 24 inches in height immediately after planting. This will need to be amended on the plan.

An irrigation plan has been submitted, as required.

Additionally, reviewing some of the civil plans that were submitted to the Planning Department, the following comments are offered:

A review of the site plan (A-1.0 and C-1.0) indicate two structures?? being placed very close to existing trees and palms, several swales to be constructed within critical root zones of existing trees/palms, and swales being placed in front of the two existing structures on William Street where vegetation is supposed to remain and not be disturbed. These plans need to be reconciled with the existing and proposed landscape plans. Swales and structures that might impact vegetation to remain/protected must be relocated.

On the Royal Street side of the project the plans (C-1.0) state that a 21 ft long trench connects to adjacent swales. What swales? (plans do not show any swales in this area.) That trench is immediately adjacent to the root zones of two Royal Poinciana trees.



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