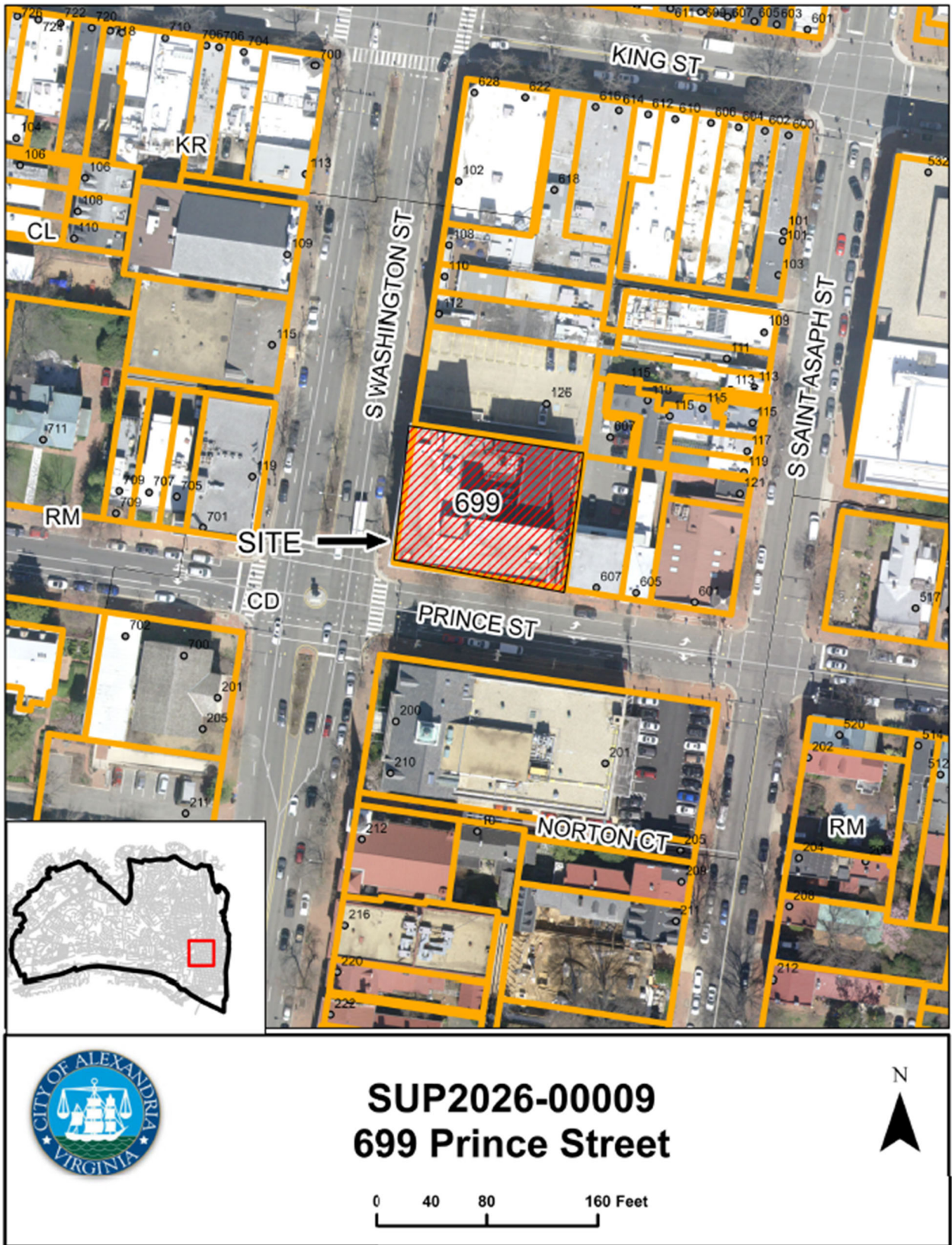


DOCKET ITEM #3
Special Use Permit #2026-00009
699 Prince Street
Hotel Heron

Application	General Data	
Public hearing and consideration of a new use request to operate rooftop outdoor live entertainment at 699 Prince Street.	Planning Commission Hearing:	June 2, 2026
	City Council Hearing:	June 13, 2026
Address: 699 Prince Street Alexandria, VA 22314	Zone:	CD/ Commercial Downtown
Applicant: J River 699 Prince Street LLC	Small Area Plan:	Old Town Small Area Plan

Staff Recommendation: *APPROVAL* subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the recommended permit conditions found in Section III of this report.

Staff Reviewers: Lanning Blaser, lanning.blaser@alexandriava.gov
Rachel Drescher, rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov



I. DISCUSSION

The applicant, J River 699 Prince Street LLC, requests Special Use Permit approval to operate outdoor live entertainment on an existing rooftop restaurant.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is a 12,342 square foot lot of record situated on the northeast corner of Prince Street and S. Washington Street. The site has 123 square feet of frontage along Prince Street and 100 square feet of frontage along S. Washington Street.

The restaurant consists of both a ground-floor and rooftop component. The ground-floor restaurant space is accessed from the storefront entrance on S. Washington Street, and the rooftop restaurant is accessed separately from the lobby in the 699 Prince Street building. The rooftop space is approximately 3,000 square feet.



Figure 1: Front Façade, 699 Prince Street

The site is zoned CD/Commercial Downtown. The site is located within the boundaries of the Old Town Small Area Plan, King Street Retail Strategy, and the Old & Historic Alexandria District (OHAD). The site is bordered by commercial, institutional and mixed-use buildings on S. Washington Street, and office buildings to the east of the site fronting Prince and S. St. Asaph Streets.

BACKGROUND

According to real estate records, the subject property was developed in 1900 with a five-story hotel known as the George Mason Hotel. The building is six stories and “L”-shaped. Building alterations were added to the rear of the building in the 1940s and 1990s. City Council approved Development Special Use Permit, DSUP #2018-0008, to convert the existing office building to a hotel with 99 units and Special Use Permit, SUP#2018-0064, to operate the restaurant and outdoor rooftop dining. The hotel and restaurant opened in June of 2024.

The restaurant has a history of noise complaints, predominantly in 2024. On October 11, 2024, a zoning inspector issued a warning citation after confirming audible noise beyond the property line after 9 p.m., a violation of Condition #12 of SUP #2018-00064 and the noise ordinance. Past complaint records notate that staff has informed the business of the SUP's noise condition and the noise ordinance. One complaint was received in May 2026. In response, City staff contacted the owner, then conducted a follow-up inspection, confirming the music had been turned off.

Staff visited the site on the evening of April 30th, 2026 to evaluate the sound levels for the proposed live entertainment. The business had an instrumentalist playing the guitar and singing at what would be standard operating levels. Staff measured the sound from the ground floor across the

street at two different times. For the first measurement, staff noted audible noise levels. For the second measurement, the business lowered the volume and the sound was not audible. This testing was done around 5:30 p.m. during hours that generally produce more noise than later hours due to traffic and the site's proximity to Washington Street.



Figure 2: Aerial view

PROPOSAL

The applicant requests outdoor live entertainment at the rooftop restaurant. The applicant proposes to host local DJ's and instrumentalists for live entertainment that would occur during specific operating hours Thursday to Sunday. No other changes are proposed.

<u>Day</u>	<u>Hours of Outdoor Live Entertainment</u>
Thursday	5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday	5 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Saturday	5 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Sunday	1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The proposed hours of outdoor live entertainment are within the outdoor dining hours approved for the rooftop restaurant, which operates from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. daily. Condition #2 of the outdoor dining Special Use Permit, SUP #2018-00064, is outlined below.

The hours of operation for the indoor and rooftop restaurant shall be limited to between 6:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m. daily. For indoor seating, meals ordered before 2:00 a.m. may be served, but no new patrons shall be admitted, and no alcoholic beverages shall be served, and all patrons must leave by 3:00 a.m. The rooftop restaurant shall be closed and cleared of all customers by the end of the hours of operation. (P&Z)

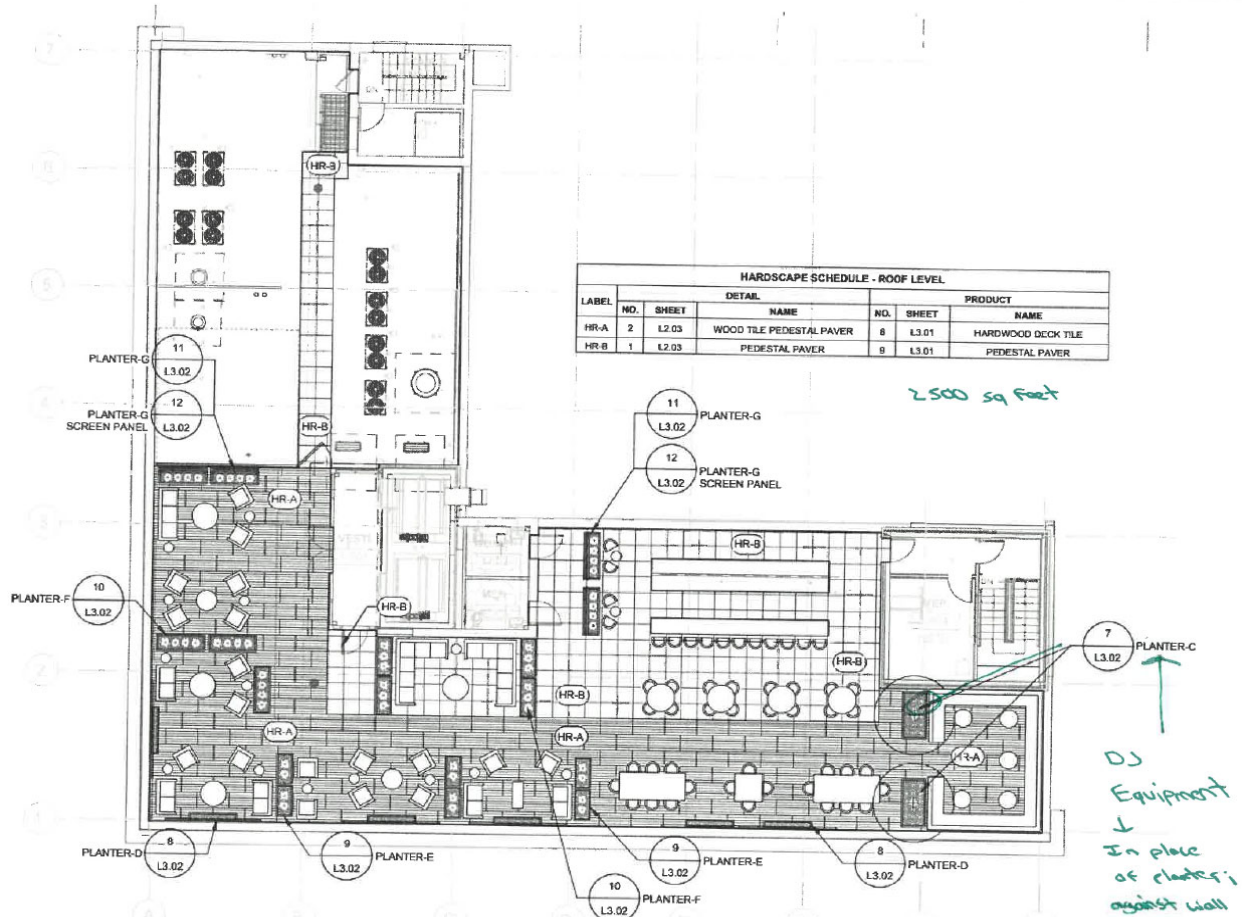


Figure 3: Rooftop floor plan

PARKING

Pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Section 8-300(b), the restaurant has no required parking due to its location in the Central Business District. The addition of outdoor live entertainment does not increase the square footage of the site or change the parking requirement. However, through Special Use Permit SUP #2018-00041 valet parking services are provided at the Prince Street entrance.



Figure 4: rooftop view

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject site is located within the CD/ Commercial Downtown Zone and in the Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD). Outdoor live entertainment is permitted in the CD zone with Special Use Permit approval, pursuant to Section 1-1703(A) of the Zoning Ordinance. Recent zoning text updates permit indoor live entertainment uses by-right.

The use is consistent with the Old Town Small Area Plan and the King Street Retail Strategy, which designates the area as commercial. The plans encourage entertainment venues within the downtown core of Alexandria. The Old Town Small Area Plan concentrates commercial uses along King and Washington Street. The plan notes the unique nature of Old Town because of the close proximity of commercial and residential uses that need to be maintained with care when permitting commercial uses. Further, the King Street Retail Strategy designates this area as a “regional crossroads sub-area” highlighting the location as an intersection of two major streets with a diversity of buildings and uses. The King Street Retail Strategy notes in its market analysis that “King Street also lacks a significant base of entertainment venues, which often for, an integral part of a main street retail environment, creates return visitors to the street and provides nighttime activity.” Entertainment can help fill a gap that has been long identified in the local market and can help strengthen King Street’s overall destination appeal for tourists and other visitors. The King Street Retail Strategy also notes that “Entertainment, recreation and visitor attractions.....help diversify the existing mix and add quality of life to the corridor as a 24-hour destination district.” The King Street Retail Strategy states restaurants and music venues encourage activity throughout the day.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff generally support the applicants’ request for rooftop outdoor live entertainment. Staff finds the live entertainment use is well-suited for the commercial area and a reasonable addition to the hotel and its restaurant. The Old Town Small Area Plan and the King Street Retail Strategy support a mix of commercial uses, specifically encouraging live entertainment to attract visitors and locals and enhance the mixed-use environment of the CD zone.

Generally, outdoor live entertainment has the potential to generate noise impacts on surrounding areas. Although the property is located within a commercial area, residences are located within the vicinity along Prince Street and S. Saint Asaph Street. Nevertheless, staff finds the impacts to nearby properties can be managed with the following conditions.

Condition #3: This condition restricts the live entertainment hours of operation. The rooftop restaurant must comply with regular outdoor dining hours as permitted in the SUP.

Condition #4: This condition requires the business operator to use an in-house sound system to monitor noise levels. This condition creates a standard operating noise level that the business operators can manage independently from hired DJ’s or music entertainers.

Condition# 5: This condition requires all rooftop speakers must be facing downward to reduce the amount of noise that carries outward and over the rooftop. During the site visit, staff found many of the speakers were facing outward.

Condition #6: This condition has been added to require the applicant to provide contact community liaison information so that hotel staff may mitigate noise concerns in real time. This information will be made available to the public on the businesses webpage and the hotel must ensure that complaints are responded to immediately.

Conditions #7 and #8: These are standard conditions that state noise levels must comply with the City's noise ordinance and amplified music, such as radios and Bluetooth speakers, are not permitted during closing hours for staff.

Given the possible noise impacts, staff has added the condition to review the SUP in six months and again after one year to review compliance with these conditions and the use's compatibility at this site.

Subject to the conditions stated in Section III of this report, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit request.

III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Staff recommend *approval* subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. The Special Use Permit shall be granted to the applicant only or to any business or entity in which the applicant has a controlling interest. Any change in the ownership of the use that is the subject of the administrative permit may be transferred administratively with the approval of the director pursuant to the requirements of Section 11-511 of the Zoning Ordinance. The term 'SUP Holder' shall mean the applicant and any successor approved by the City (P&Z)
2. The SUP holder shall conduct employee training sessions on an ongoing basis to advise employees of the conditions of the SUP. (P&Z)
3. The outdoor hours of live entertainment shall be limited to 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Thursdays, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Sunday. (P&Z)
4. The SUP holder shall ensure all DJs and musicians performing in the rooftop area shall use only the permanent in-house sound system, which shall be equipped with and operated through a noise governor. (T&ES) (P&Z)
5. All rooftop speakers shall be oriented downward toward the rooftop activity area and shall not be directed outward toward adjacent properties or public rights-of-way. (T&ES) (P&Z)

6. The SUP holder shall designate a community liaison responsible for responding promptly to noise complaints from nearby residents and property owners. The community liaison's telephone number and e-mail address shall be posted on the business's website.(T&ES) (P&Z)
7. The SUP holder shall comply with the city's noise ordinance. No amplified sound shall be audible at the property line after 11:00 pm. (T&ES)
8. The SUP holder shall not allow employees to use amplified sound, including radios and Bluetooth speakers, while cleaning and washing the rooftop dining area. (T&ES)
9. The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the special use permit six months after it has been operational and then again after 1 year, and then again every three years for compliance with all conditions and may docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; or the Director has determined that new or revised conditions are needed to offset land use impacts not addressed in the City Code. (P&Z)

STAFF: Tony LaColla, AICP, Division Chief, Land Use + Preservation
Rachel Drescher, Principal Planner
Lanning Blaser, Urban Planner

Staff Note: In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Transportation & Environmental Services:

If live entertainment is approved and to ensure compliance with the noise code, OEQ recommends:

R-1 Music and Live Entertainment on Rooftop Venue:

- a. Applicant must develop a noise mitigation plan for all activities to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES and the Director of P&Z. The noise mitigation plan shall be submitted for review and implemented, within given durations, which would be determined as appropriate.
- b. Outdoor amplified music in the form of background music shall end no later than Sunday – Thursday at 8-9pm and Friday – Saturday at 10-11pm. Final limitations on time are to be determined.
- c. All live entertainment during approved hours before 9pm shall maintain a 65dB maximum level and after 9pm shall maintain a 60dB maximum level.
- d. Applicant shall use in-house system, equipped with a governor, for all live entertainment in the rooftop area.
- e. Applicant shall designate an employee as a community liaison to respond to nearby property owners' noise concerns. The contact phone number and e-mail for the community liaison shall be available on the businesses webpage.
- f. Staff shall not use amplified sound, including radios and Bluetooth speakers, while cleaning and washing the rooftop dining area.
- g. The projection of live entertainment from within the restaurant to the outdoor rooftop area via loudspeakers through open doors and windows shall be prohibited at all times. (T&ES)

R-2 Supply deliveries, loading, and unloading activities shall not occur between the hours of 11:00pm and 7:00am. (T&ES)

R-3 The applicant shall control cooking odors, smoke and any other air pollution from operations at the site and prevent them from leaving the property or becoming a nuisance to neighboring properties, as determined by the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services. (T&ES)

R-4 The use must comply with the city's noise ordinance. No amplified sound shall be audible at the property line after 11:00 pm. (T&ES)

Code Enforcement:

No comment. Existing CO (CC2024-00103) approved for roof terrace use. No change.

Fire:

No comments or concerns.

Health:

No comments.

Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities:

No comments.

Police Department:

No comments received.



APPLICATION

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

SPECIAL USE PERMIT # _____

PROPERTY LOCATION: 699 Prince Street, Alexandria VA, 22314

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 074.02-09-30

ZONE: CD - Commercial Downtown

APPLICANT:

Name: J River 699 Prince St LLC

Address:

PROPOSED USE: Existing hotel with multiple food and beverage amenities. We seek to have ability to host DJ's at existing rooftop venue.

- ☒ THE UNDERSIGNED, hereby applies for a Special Use Permit in accordance with the provisions of Article XI, Section 4-11-500 of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.
- ☒ THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria staff and Commission Members to visit, inspect, and photograph the building premises, land etc., connected with the application.
- ☒ THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article IV, Section 4-1404(D)(7) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.
- ☒ THE UNDERSIGNED, hereby attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required to be furnished by the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. The applicant is hereby notified that any written materials, drawings or illustrations submitted in support of this application and any specific oral representations made to the Director of Planning and Zoning on this application will be binding on the applicant unless those materials or representations are clearly stated to be non-binding or illustrative of general plans and intentions, subject to substantial revision, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-207(A)(10), of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Matthew Karow

Print Name of Applicant or Agent

Mailing/Street Address

City and State

Zip Code

Signature

1.20.2026

Date _____

Telephone #

Fax #

Email address

PROPERTY OWNER'S AUTHORIZATION

As the property owner of J River 699 Prince Street LLC, I hereby
(Property Address)
grant the applicant authorization to apply for the Special Use Permit use as
(use)
described in this application.

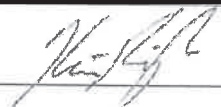
Name: Kevin Riegler

Phone: _____

Please Print

Address: _____

Email: _____

Signature: 

Date: 1.20.2026

1. Floor Plan and Plot Plan. As a part of this application, the applicant is required to submit a floor plan and plot or site plan with the parking layout of the proposed use. The SUP application checklist lists the requirements of the floor and site plans. The Planning Director may waive requirements for plan submission upon receipt of a written request which adequately justifies a waiver.

☐ Required floor plan and plot/site plan attached.

☒ Requesting a waiver. See attached written request.

2. The applicant is the (check one):

☐ Owner

☐ Contract Purchaser

☐ Lessee or

☐ Other: Authorized Agent/Signatory of the subject property.

State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant or owner, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent.

OWNERSHIP AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Use additional sheets if necessary

1. Applicant. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1. MR Aparium Prince Street Parent Investor LLC		100%
2.		
3.		

2. Property. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the property located at 699 Prince Street, Alexandria VA, 22314 (address), unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1. MR Aparium Prince Street Parent Investor LLC		100%
2.		
3.		

3. Business or Financial Relationships. Each person or entity indicated above in sections 1 and 2, with an ownership interest in the applicant or in the subject property are require to disclose **any** business or financial relationship, as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance, existing at the time of this application, or within the 12-month period prior to the submission of this application with any member of the Alexandria City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals or either Boards of Architectural Review. **All fields must be filled out completely. Do not leave blank. (If there are no relationships please indicated each person or entity and "None" in the corresponding fields).**

For a list of current council, commission and board members, as well as the definition of business and financial relationship, [click here](#).

Name of person or entity	Relationship as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance	Member of the Approving Body (i.e. City Council, Planning Commission, etc.)
1. None		
2.		
3.		

NOTE: Business or financial relationships of the type described in Sec. 11-350 that arise after the filing of this application and before each public hearing must be disclosed prior to the public hearings.

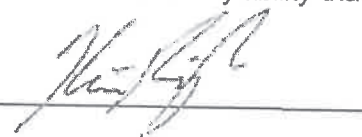
As the applicant or the applicant's authorized agent, I hereby attest to the best of my ability that the information provided above is true and correct.

1.20.2026

Date

Kevin Riegler

Printed Name



USE CHARACTERISTICS

4. The proposed special use permit request is for (*check one*):

☐ a new use requiring a special use permit,
☐ an expansion or change to an existing use without a special use permit,
☒ an expansion or change to an existing use with a special use permit,
☐ other. Please describe: _____

5. Please describe the capacity of the proposed use:

A. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect?
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).
Average 80-90 customers on Thursday-Saturday evenings, which is when we seek to add the additional entertainment offering.

B. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect?
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).
Existing staff - no changes to current staffing (4-6 per shift).

6. Please describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:

Day:	Hours:
Thursday	5p-9p
Friday	5p-10p
Saturday	5p-10p
Sunday	1P-7P

7. Please describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use.

A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.

Currently operating at or below 65 decibels (reader is installed) and no changes to these levels.

B. How will the noise be controlled?

Using currently existing measures including the decibel reader. A noise governor, and community liaison have also been appointed, internally.

8. Describe any potential odors emanating from the proposed use and plans to control them:
N/A

9. Please provide information regarding trash and litter generated by the use.

- A. What type of trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. office paper, food wrappers)
No additional trash or garbage from existing levels and use.
- B. How much trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. # of bags or pounds per day or per week)
No additional trash or garbage from existing levels and use.
- C. How often will trash be collected?
Current schedule remains in tact via our Trash and Recycling Broker, Road Runner.
- D. How will you prevent littering on the property, streets and nearby properties?
No changes to current - currently staffed with restaurant staff, Housekeeping, Engineering and Manager on Duty to ensure diligence.

10. Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

☐ Yes. ☒ No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

- 11.** Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

☐ Yes. ☒ No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

- 12.** What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of nearby residents, employees and patrons?
We currently operate the space which includes a Manager on Duty. No changes are required as no changes to existing business levels.

ALCOHOL SALES

- 13.** A. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe existing (if applicable) and proposed alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales.

Alcohol is already approved and sold in the space - no changes to current structure or offerings.

PARKING AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

14. A. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:

0 _____ Standard spaces
0 _____ Compact spaces
0 _____ Handicapped accessible spaces.
Valet Service _____ Other.

Planning and Zoning Staff Only

Required number of spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200A _____

Does the application meet the requirement?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- B. Where is required parking located? (check one)

☐ on-site

☒ off-site

If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located?

Valet per our existing Parking Management Plan at 277 S Washington

PLEASE NOTE: Pursuant to Section 8-200 (C) of the Zoning Ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.

- C. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to Section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the Zoning Ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

☐ Parking reduction requested; see attached supplemental form

15. Please provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

- A. How many loading spaces are available for the use? N/A

Planning and Zoning Staff Only

Required number of loading spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200 _____

Does the application meet the requirement?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- B. Where are off-street loading facilities located? Existing Hotel Loading Dock
- C. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?
Existing loading operations - no changes.
- D. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?
Existing loading operations - no changes.
16. Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?
N/A - no changes to existing hotel operation.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

17. Will the proposed uses be located in an existing building? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Do you propose to construct an addition to the building? ☐ Yes ☒ No
How large will the addition be? _____ square feet.
18. What will the total area occupied by the proposed use be?
2500 sq. ft. (existing) + 0 sq. ft. (addition if any) = 2500 sq. ft. (total)
19. The proposed use is located in: *(check one)*
☐ a stand alone building
☐ a house located in a residential zone
☐ a warehouse
☐ a shopping center. Please provide name of the center: _____
☐ an office building. Please provide name of the building: _____
☒ other. Please describe: Hotel Heron - existing hotel and restaurant.

End of Application

HARDSCAPE SCHEDULE - ROOF LEVEL					
LABEL	DETAIL			PRODUCT	
	NO.	SHEET	NAME	NO.	SHEET
HR-A	2	L2.03	WOOD TILE PEDESTAL PAYER	8	L3.01
HR-B	1	L2.03	PEDESTAL PAYER	9	L3.01
					PEDESTAL PAYER

2500 sq feet

