



GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Office of the Commissioner

**Report by the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning on  
the Petition to Amend Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-6, Application No.  
CCZP0107-25**

Petition of applicant, Earl Charles, to amend Plot Nos. 242, 243, 563 and 564 Estate Strawberry Hill, Queen Quarter, St. Croix from R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density). The purpose of the request is to construct a sixplex apartment building for rentals.



*Site photo- from left to right: single-family dwelling, historical ruins, & storage building*

**Property Owner(s):** Earl A. Charles as per Deed of Gift (with life interest to Lena Charles) dated July 19, 2011, Document Nos. 2011002772, 2011002773, 2011002774 and 2011002775.

**Applicant Representative(s):** Earl Charles and Alicia Barnes, consultant.

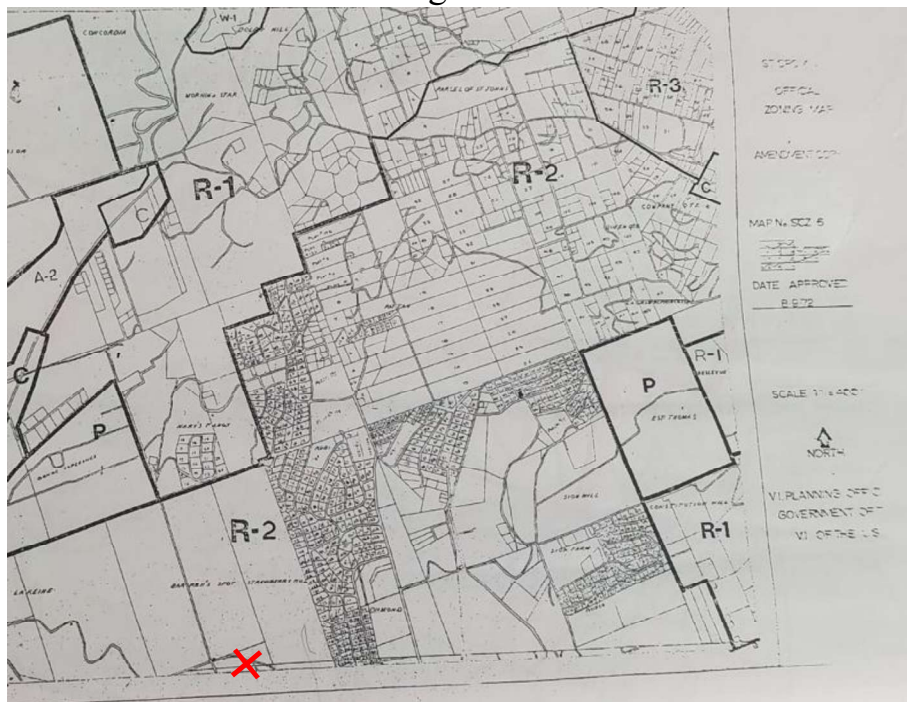
**Acreeage:** Each plot is approximately 0.13 acres. Combined, all four plots are approximately 0.52 acres; described in survey drawing No. 2733-S.

**Surrounding Uses and Zones:** To the north is a mix of vegetation and historical ruins. To the east, west, and south are residential homes.



MapGeo aerial view of property (marked in red)

The surrounding area is zoned R-2.



Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-6 (property location indicated by red X)

**Infrastructure:** Public lines will handle water needs and sewage.

**Other DPNR Division reviews needed:** A Phase I Cultural Resources Survey will need to be conducted and reviewed by the Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office.

**Project Summary:** The application proposes a two-story six-unit apartment building (four 2-bedroom apartments and two 1-bedroom apartments). The units would range from 2,220 to 4,440 square feet in size, and the building would be constructed in one phase taking about 24 months to complete.

The proposed amenities include high-speed internet, CCTV, trash removal, and green space. Ten parking spaces are proposed. Appropriate landscaping and boundary buffering are also proposed.



*Conceptual Site Plan Layout*

**Public Response at DPNR-CCZP Public Hearing held January 29, 2026:**

There was no opposition or concern expressed with the proposal. No post-hearing comments were received.

**Analysis of Request/Reason for Recommendation:** The 2024 adopted Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan noted the rising cost of housing, the USVI experiencing a housing crisis, need for more affordable housing options

and housing types, and housing affordability as a significant challenge. The main drivers of the lack of affordable housing are the comparably low incomes of USVI residents, high costs of construction, limited availability of developable land, demand pressures from non-residents, and high costs of homeowner’s insurance and other financing challenges.

The provision of housing must be balanced with key themes and goals that were common across all three islands and that are important topics in the Comp Plan, namely, one theme/goal being reducing spot zoning/no more spot zoning (the rezoning of a parcel of land to benefit an owner for a use incompatible with surrounding uses and not for the purpose or furthering a comprehensive plan). Analyzing the need for housing, the intent for a solely residential development, and the development potential of the properties, the current zoning was assessed to determine the ability to develop the proposal while being compatible with the Comp Plan.

There are several development tools currently available which were analyzed to determine if the development could be accomplished while adopting the themes and goals of the Comp Plan. These include subdivision, group dwelling permit, and Planned Area Development (PAD). The PAD option requires a minimum of five acres, therefore, automatically disqualifying the four lots due to their combined acreage of 0.52 acres. The group dwelling permit allows eight dwelling units for every acre in the R-2 zone. At 0.52 acres, the four lots could be developed with a maximum of four dwelling units. The four lots are already subdivided and are substandard for the R-2 zoning (R-2 minimum lot size requirement is 10,000 sf while each lot is only 5,523.408 sf.).

Due to their substandard size, the properties were further analyzed to determine if rezoning is in fact appropriate due to the history of the subdivision and whether the R-3 versus the R-4 would be most appropriate.

Zoning Section	Law. 229.	Proposal	R-3	R-4
Development Provisions				
Maximum persons per acre (density)		6 apartments= 20 persons	80 persons per acre or 42 persons	120 persons per acre or 63 persons
Maximum occupancy	lot	Existing & proposed buildings= 4,600 sf (less than 30%)	30% or 6,795.36 sf	50% or 11,325.6 sf

Minimum lot size	Each lot= 5,523.408 sf	6,000 sf	3,000 sf
Usable open space	Greater than 35% virgin/landscaped land	35% or 7,927.92	No requirement
Maximum height	2 stories	6 stories	3 stories


The Estate Strawberry subdivision was created in 1970-1971, creating lots measuring less than 6000 sf. The subdivision has access to public water and sewer lines, therefore, when the Zoning Code was adopted in 1972, the R-4 zoning district would have been the most appropriate. Due to the R-4 zoning district allowing for medium density residential development on minimum lot sizes of 3000 sf., the whole subdivision including the petitioned lots would best benefit from a more aptly assigned R-4 zoning. Development applications received over the years for the subdivision require constant correction of zoning violations, substandard calculations, and nonconforming waivers due to the Government adopting the inappropriate zone for the subdivision.

The Department has recognized that rezoning is warranted when an area was originally placed in the wrong zone or when the current zone fails to reflect the comprehensive plan, existing land use, or community needs. The R-3 was petitioned for by the applicant, but the Department has determined the most appropriate zoning would be the R-4 (Residential-Medium Density) zone to reflect the best zone that should have been previously adopted for the whole subdivision.

**Recommendation**

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources recommends the following:

Pursuant to Title 29 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 238, Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-6 for the island of St. Croix be amended by changing the zoning designation of amend Plot Nos. 242, 243, 563 and 564 Estate Strawberry Hill, Queen Quarter, St. Croix collectively consisting of 0.52 acres as described on survey drawing No. 2733-S from R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to R-4 (Residential-Medium Density).

  
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 Jozette J. Walker, CPM  
 Assistant Commissioner

2/25/2026  
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 Date

Cc: Jean-Pierre L. Oriol, Commissioner