

# CITY OF JERSEY CITY

Department of Housing, Economic Development & Commerce  
Division of City Planning



## Interdepartmental Memorandum

DATE: 9/30/2021  
TO: Historic Preservation Commission  
FROM: Margaret A. O'Neill, Historic Preservation Specialist  
CC: Elizabeth Barna, Esq., HPC Counsel  
Stephen Joseph, Esq.  
Erik Liepins, Applicant  
75 Jersey City, LLC, Owners  
/File  
RE: Case #H21-098  
75 Montgomery Street  
Block: 14301/Lot: 7  
Zone: H / Paulus Hook Historic District

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### I. PLANS AND DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. Historic Preservation Application, resubmitted August 31, 2021
2. Signage Architectural Plans entitled *Taco Bell 75 Montgomery Street (Unit #2) Jersey City NJ 07302* by Zelta Design, dated September 13, 2021
3. Signage Package, entitled *Taco Bel* by Everbrite dated September 21, 2021
4. Construction Documents/Architectural Plans entitled *Taco Bell 75 Montgomery Street Jersey City NJ 07302* by Zelta Design, dated June 25, 2021
5. Duct and Diffuser Plan entitled *Duct & Diffuser Plan – First Floor Taco Bell 75 Montgomery Street Jersey City NJ 07302* by Zelta Design, dated July 9, 2021
6. Agilight Signrayz Ultra 650 Specification Sheet, undated
7. Interior Rendering, undated
8. Kawneer Trifab VG Framing Systems Sheet, undated
9. Trifab® 451UT Framing System 084113 Aluminum-Framed Entrances and Storefronts Guide Specifications, undated
10. Photo entitled *Hudson Company National Bank*, undated

### II. PROJECT & PROPOSAL BACKGROUND

The property has been owned by 75 Jersey City, L.L.C. (herein referred to as “The Owner”) since November 5, 2003. Per historical and cartographic evidence, the building has had a variety of commercial uses. The property’s most significant use was when the main floor operated as the Garden State National Bank; the upper stories originally housed offices. To HPC Staff’s knowledge, the building retains its variety of commercial uses.

Per the submitted application and supporting documents listed above, the applicant is seeking a

Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a blade sign at a primary façade, exterior ventilation system at the rear, and a new aluminum storefront system at 75 Montgomery Street, an altered, contributing Neo-Classical building designed by John T. Rowland, constructed between 1909 and 1919. Additionally, the applicant has included interior fit out drawings in the application materials for review and approval under this application.

The HPC previously approved a CoA application for upper floor window replacement (H18-460) at the regular meeting of January 13, 2021, as well as multiple applications for interior tenant fit outs throughout the years.

The application and submitted plans were deemed complete by HPC Staff on September 23, 2021.

### **III. PROPERTY LOCATION & JURISDICTION**

75 Montgomery Street (herein referred to as “The Property”) is located in the Paulus Hook Historic District. The property is located on an oversized corner lot (75 x 100) fronting Montgomery Street on the north and Greene Street on the east. As defined in the City of Jersey City Zoning Ordinance, the property is zoned as H.

The property was designated as a contributing building within the Paulus Hook Historic District on February 1, 1977, as well as on the on the National and State Registers of Historic Places on June 20, 1982. The HPC’s jurisdiction regarding the property is defined per § 345-30, entitled *Historic Preservation Review Procedures*:

*a. No permit shall be issued or amended nor shall any construction, alteration, minor alteration, ordinary maintenance and repair or demolition be started on a landmark building nor on any sign, building, structure, object, site or landscape feature within a designated historic district, whether or not a construction permit is required, prior to a filing of an application for review by the Historic Preservation Commission or the issuance of either a Certificate of Appropriateness or a Certificate of No Effect.*

Additionally, per 2(a), *“The Historic Preservation Officer shall refer all applications for new construction, alterations, relocation or demolition to the Historic Preservation Commission for review.”*

This application comes to the HPC as referral from the Zoning Board of Adjustment per 40:55D-110 of the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law. Per this provision, the Historic Preservation Commission “... may provide its advice, which shall be conveyed through its delegation of one of its members or staff to testify orally at the hearing of the application and to explain any written report which may have been submitted.”

### **IV. REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Staff notes regarding the Powers and Duties of the Historic Preservation Commission:

Per § 345-9, entitled Historic Preservation Commission, Section (B) entitled Powers and Duties of the Historic Preservation Commission, the Commission has the following relevant powers and duties:

*(4) To advise and assist City officers, employees, boards and other bodies, including those at*

*County, regional, State and Federal levels, on all matters which have potential impact on the landmark buildings, sites, structures, object or landscape features in the City or on the ambience of a historic district.*

*(17) To issue Certificates of Appropriateness or Certificates of No Effect in accordance with the rules and standards set forth herein.*

The property is subject to following standards during the Board's consideration regarding the application seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. *Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*
2. *City of Jersey City Zoning Ordinance § 345-58 entitled H - Historic District*
3. *City of Jersey City Zoning Ordinance § 345-71 entitled Historic Design Standards*
4. *City of Jersey City Historic Preservation Commission Rules & Regulations for Alterations & Additions to Buildings & New Construction in Historic Districts*

## **V. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS**

The scope and impact of the proposed project represented by the plans were reviewed according to the City of Jersey City Zoning Ordinance § 345-30 entitled Historic Preservation Review Procedures, the City of Jersey City Zoning Ordinance § 345-71 entitled Historic Design Standards and by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation, as adopted by the ordinance.

HPC Staff takes no exception to the proposed window sign, interior tenant fit out, and ventilation system. Both appear to be standard installations for this type of work, and the rear ventilation system is similar, and smaller, than the adjacent rear ventilation system. Based on the proposed plans, there does not appear to be an adverse effect on the historic resource or the surrounding historic district as a result of this installation.

When considering replacements to a storefront system, design standards are outlined in §345-71(L)(2)(B):

- (i) *If replacement of a storefront is necessary, the design of the new storefront should reproduce the historic storefront in terms of its configuration, materials, placement, proportions and extent of glazed area. The design of the replacement store front may be based on surviving historic storefronts elsewhere on the building or another identical building, or on documentary evidence such as original architectural drawings or old photographs.*
- (ii) *In cases where the historic storefront has been replaced and there is no extant historic storefront elsewhere on the building, nor on another identical building, and no documentary evidence can be found, a contemporary design is permissible...*

The proposed storefront system does match the existing storefront system, which is not original to the building. The storefront details are not clearly visible in the 1938 Tax Photograph, but they are visible in the undated photo entitled "Hudson Company National Bank." Based on that documentary evidence, the proposed storefront does not appear to match the historic storefront system in terms of configuration, details, operation, and materials.

When considering exterior signs, design standards are outlined in §345-71(M)(1):

*All signs shall reflect the historic character of the area of the proposed sign placement and will respect the size, scale and mass of the facade, building height and rhythms and sizes of windows and door openings.*

The proposed signage does not appear to have any regard for the historic character of the Paulus Hook Historic District – it is very clearly a modern sign with a modern design made of modern materials. Additionally, while there was a sign that was historically in this location (as seen in the Hudson Company National Bank photo), this sign does not have the same or similar proportions and is not proposed to be installed in a similar manner. When reviewing the other storefronts on the building, none appear to have installed blade signage in a similar manner or design.

After hearing testimony and reviewing the submitted materials, the HPC finds that that application, as presented, would have an adverse effect on the historic resource and the surrounding Paulus Hook Historic District, it could deny the application citing the following:

1. §345-71(L)(2)(B)(i) - entitled *Storefronts. Replacement*
2. §345-71(L)(2)(B)(ii) – entitled *Storefronts. Replacement*
3. §345-71(M)(1) – entitled *Signs*

Alternatively, if the HPC finds that the application as presented would not have an adverse effect on the historic resource and the surrounding Paulus Hook Historic District, it could approve the application with the following recommended conditions:

1. The signage shall be installed into the mortar joints only, in a removable and reversible manner.
2. All exterior lighting for the signage shall be no brighter than 3000K.
3. No portion of the rear ventilation system shall be visible from any public right of way.
4. The architect, Zelta Design, shall be retained during construction and shall submit as-built, signed and sealed drawings to staff, or a signed and sealed letter representing and noting that site construction was consistent with work approved under this Certificate of Appropriateness before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
5. Shop drawings shall be provided to HPC Staff for review and approval prior to the manufacture, purchase, or installation of the new storefront system.
6. Any proposed planting or landscaping shall conform with the City of Jersey City Forestry Standards.
7. Details, Specifications, and Material Submissions not currently submitted to and approved by the HPC under this Certificate of Appropriateness, or changed during the course of construction are remanded back to the HPC.
8. All material samples and specifications shall be submitted to HPC Staff for review and approval prior to the submission of construction documents for permitting.

9. Any changes or deviations from the approved drawings are to be clearly bubbled on the construction drawings and noted in an accompanying signed and sealed letter from the architect addressed to Staff for review. Depending on the degree of change or deviation, additional review by the HPC may be required.
10. Upon final approval of this Certificate by the HPC, any deviations from the granted approval must be approved by the HPC, except in cases of emergency affecting the public safety, health and welfare. Requests for deviations from this Certificate are to be submitted through written request of the architect.