

# CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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



Interdepartmental Memorandum

DATE: 11/10/22  
TO: Historic Preservation Commission  
FROM: Daniel M, Wrieden Historic Preservation Officer  
CC: Jonathan Rekstad, Esq., HPC Counsel  
Matt Ward, PP, AICP, Supervising Planner  
Division of City Planning Staff  
Jersey City Planning Board  
Charles J. Harrington III. on behalf of 143 Columbus JC Group, LLC owner  
/File  
RE: Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness H22-101; Recommendation to the  
Jersey City Planning Board  
143 Christopher Columbus Drive  
Block: 13601/1  
Zone: Columbus Corner Redevelopment Plan Area; Van Vorst Park Historic District  
(Updated NR boundaries 1984)

## I. PLANS AND DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness; H22-101 with attached cover letter dated March 18, 2022
2. Architectural Drawings entitled *Columbus Corner Project Proposed Apartment Buildings and Commercial Barrows [sic] Street and Christopher Columbus Drive* By Bodner Architectural Studio dated 1.14.22, with revision dates of 4.14.22 through 10.7.22
3. Project Specifications entitled: *Columbus & Barrow Residences Columbus Drive, Jersey City, NJ 07302 Project Specifications* by Navia Studios dated 11.04.2022. Revision 2
4. *Shadow Study Exhibit 143 Christopher Columbus Drive - Jersey City, NJ* by Edwin Cabellero of Colliers Engineering dated 6.16.22 with revision dates of 6.8.22 and 10.10.22
5. Drawings by Edwin Cabellero of Colliers Engineering entitled: *Preliminary And Final Major Site Plan For 143 Columbus JC Group; 143 Christopher Columbus Drive; Block 129.01, Lot 1; City Of Jersey City; Hudson County, NJ* dated 4.8.22 with revision dates of 6.8.22 and 10.10.22
6. *Traffic Statement: 143 Christopher Columbus Drive; Block 12901, Lot 1 City of Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey* Colliers Engineering & Design Project No. 21008002A dated April 15, 2022 by Michelle Briehof, P.E. of Colliers Engineering and Design, Inc.
7. *Columbus Corner Redevelopment Plan* adopted Aug. 11, 2004 as amended May 8, 2019
8. *National Register Of Historic Places Inventory -- Nomination Form Van Vorst Park Historic District Entered March 5, 1980*

## **II. PROJECT & PROPOSAL BACKGROUND**

According to the statement of principal Points:

*An application has been filed by 143 Columbus Drive Group LLC with the Jersey City Planning Board for Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision approval with a deviation pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70(c) (lot size) for approval to subdivide the existing lot into five (5) lots with regard to the property located at 143 Columbus Drive, Jersey City, New Jersey, and also identified on the Jersey City Tax Maps as Block 12901, Lot 1 (the "Property"; as subdivided – to be new Lots 1.01, 1.02, 1.03, 1.04 and 1.05). The property is located in the Columbus Corner Redevelopment Plan ("Redevelopment Plan") area. [Part of the property, 322 Barrow Street, is a contributing, altered resource within the Van Vorst Park Historic District as is the land to the south fronting onto Barrow Street]*

*The purpose of the subdivision application is to facilitate the development of a project that will a) rehabilitate and develop the existing building with three (3) residential units and commercial uses on property that is located at the corner of Columbus Drive and Barrow Street and within the Historic District Rehabilitation District of the Redevelopment Plan; b) develop a new seven (7) story mixed use building with forty-four (44) parking spaces, and fifty (50) residential units on property that is located within the Mixed Use New Construction District of the Redevelopment Plan; and c) develop two (2) new townhouses containing 2 residential units, and a multi-Family building containing six (6) residential units, for a total of ten (10) residential units on property that is located within the Historic District New Construction District of the Redevelopment Plan.*

*The Property currently consists of the existing corner building used for commercial purposes and an adjacent commercial surface parking lot (a pre-existing non-conforming use). If approved, the surface parking lot will cease all operations and the parking lot use will be abandoned [before] the subdivision is perfected and the new lots are created.*

The application and the associated submittals were deemed complete by HPC Staff on Friday, November 4, 2022.

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

For the sake of convenience, please see the attached map from the Columbus Corner Redevelopment Plan which shows the following districts:

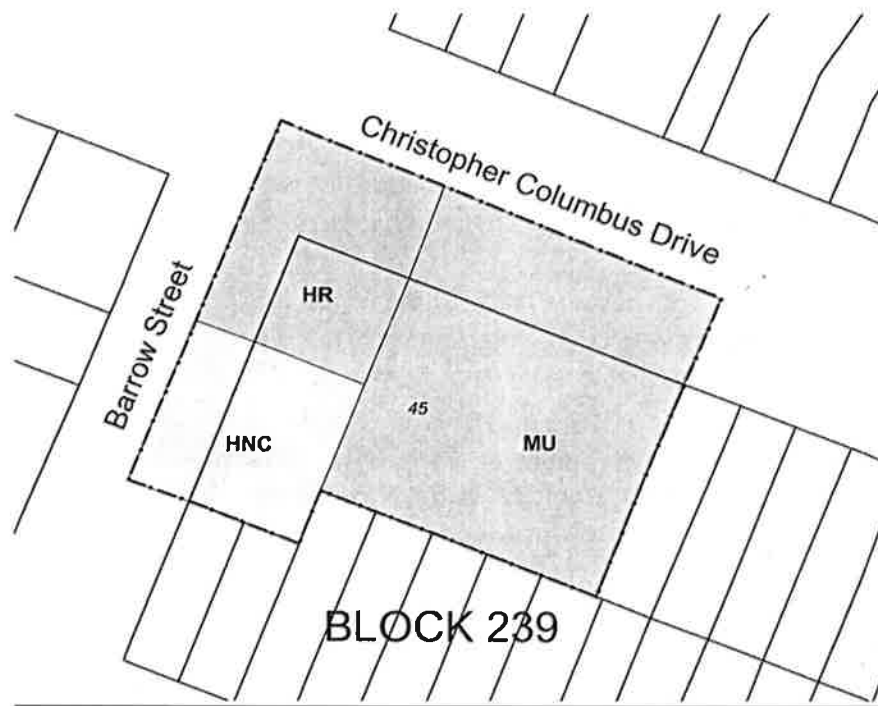
Van Vorst Park Historic District:

HNC (Historic New Construction) currently a surface parking lot

HR (Historic Rehabilitation) an altered, contributing, Italianate five story masonry building

Outside but adjacent to the district:

MU (Mixed Use New Construction)



143 Columbus Drive Block 12901 Lot 1 (herein referred to as "The Property") is located within the Columbus Corners Redevelopment Plan Area and the Van Vorst Park Historic District. Staff notes that the existing lot is considered split zoned: the HNC and HR Zones are within the historic district, the MU Zone is outside of the district. The property is a flag shaped lot which is used for surface parking, with a contributing, altered, five story, (four story with cellar) Italianate style former commercial building at the intersection of Christopher Columbus Drive and Barrow Street known also as 322 Barrow Street. As defined in the City of Jersey City Zoning Ordinance, the building falls within the Historic District Rehabilitation District of the Redevelopment Plan while the adjacent frontage on Barrow Street is within the Historic District New Construction New Construction District of the Redevelopment Plan. The frontage on Columbus Drive is outside of the Historic District, but since it is within the same redevelopment Plan Area and adjacent to the Historic District, the developer and owner/applicant has invited comments from the Commission regarding this construction.

The historic corner building on the property was originally not designated as a contributing building within the Van Vorst Park Historic District on February 1, 1977, as well as on the on the National and State Registers of Historic Places on March 4, 1980 and August 1, 1978, respectively; however this omission was corrected with the expansion of the district's boundaries by the Secretary of the Interior on October 11, 1984. The register report is inscribed: **"322 Barrow St. C1887 CONTRIBUTING 4 story, 5 bay brick loft building. Arched window and door openings now enclosed. Egg and dart molded lintels, stone sills. Bracketed cornice. Modern door on Columbus Drive elevation."** (Staff notes that the building is four (4) stories above a cellar; cumulatively five (5) stories.) The property to the south, facing Columbus Drive was also included in the boundaries of the National Register District at this time. As defined by city's zoning ordinance. 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."*

As this property falls within the Columbus Corner Redevelopment Plan Area, this application comes to the HPC as referral from the Planning Board 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 § 345-71 entitled Historic Design Standards*
3. *City of Jersey City Historic Preservation Commission Rules & Regulations for Alterations & Additions to Buildings & New Construction in Historic Districts*
4. *Columbus Corner Redevelopment Plan*

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

After reviewing the proposed project, Staff generally finds that the proposals for the different zones within the Columbus Corner Redevelopment Plan Area of the Historic District entailing the rehabilitation of the existing building at 322 Barrow Street and the construction of two new townhouses and one six family multifamily building adjacent to it to be appropriate. The proposed rehabilitation of the existing five 5 story masonry building at the corner of Christopher Columbus Drive

and Barrow Street appears to be in general conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation* as well as with the *City's Historic Design Standards*. Most of the exterior work proposed is restorative in nature and if the submitted drawings and specification book are followed, and work is done in an appropriate, professional manner consistent with industry standards especially for work affecting the history masonry and wood construction, staff believes that there should be no adverse effect on the resource.

The accommodations made for the new use including the 1.) installation of two new entrances by using an existing, altered window opening and matching that condition in the next window bay and 2.) the installation of a new entry system at the former loading dock are required in order to accommodate the new use and are reversible. The blockage and filling of the windows at the North façade is necessary to for allow the construction of the proposed new townhouses and multifamily building. This new construction is consistent with the stated aims and goals of the redevelopment plan.

As regards the new construction at Barrow Street, Staff generally finds the proposal to be appropriate and in general conformance with the City's Standards for New Construction in Historic Districts and with the Columbus Corners Redevelopment Plan. The new construction makes use of traditional cladding materials and finishes such as red orange bricks, cream colored mortar, cast brownstone and traditional detailing such as the use of a cornice, and coursed brickwork. Overall the project appears to be a successful and appropriate synthesis of both traditional and modern elements which results in a building that is clearly of its own time while being respectful of, and not distracting from, the surrounding historic resources within the historic district.

Staff notes that the building setbacks are appropriate, and align with the historic paradigm established on the blockfront by 72 Wayne Street (the frame residential building to the south) and 322 Barrow Street, the building which the owner/applicant is proposing to rehabilitate. Staff also notes that the plans do not appear to show any visible rooftop appurtenances which will have an effect on the roofline or the character of the neighborhood.

Parking is a requirement of the Redevelopment Plan and the placement of the entry point on Barrow Street is consistent with the plan and the paradigm established by the building on the corner of Wayne and Barrow, diagonally across the street. (Please see the attached traffic study for further information). Staff notes that it is unfortunate that another entry gate option, which could allow for both security and code required ventilation, has not been found. Staff encourages the applicant and their agent(s) to continue their efforts to find a gate which might better suit the unique character of the surrounding historic district.

The new construction at the Christopher Columbus frontage is not within, but is adjacent to the Historic District. However, the applicant welcomes comments regarding the design.

HPC Staff recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness and all appropriate deviations from the redevelopment plan which will allow for the project to be constructed with the following conditions:

1. Commercial surface parking lot use must terminate prior to perfecting the proposed subdivision.

2. Permits for the corner building [at the corner of Christopher Columbus Drive and Barrow Street AKA 322 Barrow Street] shall be approved prior to permits being filed or approved for [the construction of] any of the other buildings on the newly created lots.
3. The corner building [322 Barrow Street] shall receive a CO before any TCO or CO can be approved for the other buildings on the newly created lots.
4. The architect, Bodner Architectural Studio, shall be retained during construction and shall submit 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. Any deviations must be noted in the letter and may require further review by the Historic Preservation Commission.
5. Before purchase and installation, the architect shall approve all shop drawings for exterior windows and doors where applicable, ironwork, and on site construction mockups before review and approval by Staff and shall submitted for review by the Historic Preservation Officer or the Jersey City Historic Preservation Commission
6. 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.
7. Construction drawings, noting materials and finishes, cross referenced and consistent with the specifications and civil drawings, are to be reviewed by, approved by and signed by the Historic Preservation Officer or HPC Staff for compliance with the issued Certificate of Appropriateness before construction permits are applied for and issued.
8. Any changes or deviations from the approved drawings are be to 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, it will be left to the discretion of staff if additional review by the HPC may be required.
9. Any changes or deviations from the approved plans over the course of construction shall be submitted to HPC Staff from the architect of record for approval on an as-needed basis. Changes or deviations that result in new work may require a new application to the HPC for said work.
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.

*Respectfully  
Submitted  
[Signature]*