

Principal Points Statement

225 Dwight Street
Block 24904, Lot 9

An application has been filed for the property located at 225 Dwight Street, also known as Block 24904, Lot 9 on the official Jersey City Tax Maps (the “Property”), with the Jersey City Zoning Board of Adjustment for Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval for the construction of a five (5) story residential building with fifty (50) dwellings units, including five (5) moderate income affordable units, with a parking garage with thirty-three (33) vehicle parking spaces (the “Project”). The subject Property is in the R-1 One and Two Family Housing Zoning District (“R-1 Zone”). Therefore, the Applicant is seeking a use variance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70.d.(1). The Applicant is also seeking a height variance, if necessary (stories and feet) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70.d(6). All other bulk standards and criteria are subsumed within the d.(1) use variance application.

The subject Property is located on Dwight Street between Bergen Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and is an oversized 17,849.3 square foot lot. The Property is currently a house of worship.

The proposed Project consists of the development of a five story (5) building with fifty (50) dwelling units, including five (5) moderate income affordable units, and a parking garage with thirty-three (33) parking spaces. The ground floor/first floor will contain a parking garage, gym, and lobby. The second floor through fourth floor will contain thirteen (13) dwelling units, and the fifth floor will contain (11) dwelling units. The units throughout the building consist of thirty-three (33) one bedroom units, thirteen (13) two-bedroom units, one (1) three-bedroom unit, and three (3) studio units. There will be one affordable unit on the second floor consisting of a one-bedroom apartment, two affordable units on the third floor consisting of one studio and one one-bedroom apartment, one affordable unit on the fourth floor consisting of a one-bedroom apartment, and one affordable unit on the fifth floor consisting of a two-bedroom apartment.

The garage, which is located on the first floor, will be approximately 9,982 square feet and will contain thirty-three (33) parking spaces.

The upper roof will contain a green roof of approximately 3,696 square feet.

In terms of the use variance, the subject Property is particularly well suited to accommodate the proposed Project. First, the subject Property is much larger (17,849.3 square feet) than the minimum required lot area (2,500 square feet) in the R-1 Zone. In addition, although the subject Property is located in the R-1 Zone, the area does not display the typical one- and two-family housing characteristics of an R-1 Zone.

As to the surrounding neighborhood, Dwight Street is located in the R-1 Zone, and although there are townhouses on this block, there are numerous four or five story corporate offices and buildings along Bergen avenue, as well as a life center in between Dwight Street and MLK Drive located at 140 MLK Drive.

The subject Property is located approximately 0.7 miles (according to Google Maps) by foot from the MLK Drive Light Rail Station with access to the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail line. Additionally, the Property is surrounded by numerous bus stops, some of which are: Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. at Stegman Street, which operates the number 87 bus (to 87 Gates Ave via Journal Square), and which is approximately 420 feet away; and JFK Blvd at Woodlawn Ave, which operates the numbers 10 and 119 buses (to Journal Square and New York respectively), and which is approximately .2 miles away. There is also a Citi Bike Station at Dwight Street and Bergen Avenue that is approximately .1 miles away. As such, this proximity to public transportation makes this Property uniquely suitable for the increased density associated with a multi-family residential building. Therefore, the Property is well-suited for the proposed use given the variety of surrounding land uses, access to public transportation, and the size and location of the Property.

In terms of the positive criteria, the proposed Project will eliminate an unsightly and incompatible empty lot of space and renovate/rehabilitate an already aesthetically pleasing building that is not being used. With this, the Project will rehabilitate and incorporate a portion of the preexisting house of worship to create an attractive residential building more compatible with the character of the surrounding area and the residential zoning. Moreover, the rehabilitated/renovated portion of the house of worship will improve upon the current

building's compatibility with the character of the surrounding area and allow the building to become utilized again, thereby bringing the Property into better conformity with the intent and purpose of the Zone Plan.

The proposed Project will advance the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law and promote the general welfare:

- The existing building is a house of worship with an adjacent vacant lot. The vacant lot is unused and although multi-family buildings are not permitted within the R-1 Zone, the proposed Project is consistent with the surrounding area and is more consistent with the residential zoning. Therefore the granting of the variance will promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.a.
- The subject Property is an oversized lot of approximately 17,849.3 square feet with plenty of space for the proposed Project which thus ensures that adequate light, air, and open space is provided; both consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.c.
- The subject Property provides sufficient space in an appropriate location for the multi-family use being proposed; consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.g.
- The proposed Project will rehabilitate/renovate an already attractive, currently unused building that will also create an attractive residential building that will not alter the streetscape and will promote a desirable visual environment; consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.i.
- The proposed development plans to rehabilitate and incorporate a portion of the existing house of worship, which will promote the conservation of historic sites and prevent urban sprawl and degradation of the environment; consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.j.

The granting of the requested variances will not result in a substantial detriment to the public good or general welfare. The Project proposes a use that is consistent with the character of the surrounding area in conjunction with the availability of public transportation in the area, including proximity to the MLK Drive Light Rail Station and bus routes in the immediate vicinity. The granting of the variances will likewise not result in a substantial detriment to the intent and purpose of the Zone Plan. The subject Property is a much larger lot than required in the R-1 Zone and therefore is particularly well suited to accommodate a larger multi-family building.

The use variance may also be granted because the Project will advance the goals of the Zone Plan by turning an unused building into one for residential purposes and requires no demolition of an already conforming structure. Moreover, the oversized Property can accommodate the additional dwelling units associated with the Project and granting the variance will advance the purposes of the Jersey City Master Plan and the R-1 Zone plan. Therefore, the granting of the variance will not rise to a level of substantial detriment to the intent and purpose of the Zone Plan, notwithstanding that the proposed use is not a permitted use within the R-1 Zone.

The height and stories variances, if necessary, may also be granted. The oversized Property can accommodate the increased height with the Project, and the granting of the variances will advance the purposes of the Jersey City Master Plan and the R-1 Zone plan.

The Property is significantly larger than the minimum required lot size in the R-1 Zone. In addition, the location of the Property and layout of the block and neighboring blocks helps to mitigate the visual impact of the increased height given the size of the Property, the number of commercial and retail businesses nearby and the large surface parking lot at the corner of Dwight Street and MLK Drive. This will serve to mitigate any impact of the height and stories on residents and will lessen any impact on the neighboring community.

Moreover, there are special reasons to grant this variance because although the proposed Project is taller than what is permitted in the R-1 Zone, the proposed Project will replace an unused building on the Property to create an attractive residential building. Further, the site can accommodate the increased height because the Property is oversized and the interior

block layout minimizes the impact on neighbors. Granting the variance will advance the purposes of the JC LDO and the Jersey City Master Plan. For these reasons, the height and stories variances may be granted.

The Applicant reserves the right to supplement the foregoing reasons with expert testimony at the Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing.