

Principal Points Statement
19-21 Armstrong Avenue (Block 25901, Lots 13-14)
Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey

October 20, 2020

An application has been filed for the above noted property with the Jersey City Zoning Board of Adjustment for Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval; approval of a use variance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70.d.(1); a height variance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70.d.(6); and bulk “c” variances for minimum front yard setback, minimum rear yard setback, maximum building coverage, maximum lot coverage, minimum drive aisle width, and maximum height of roof structures and appurtenances. The subject property is located in the One- and Two-Family (R-1) District.

The subject property is identified as Lots 13 and 14 on Block 25901 and is located on the southside of Armstrong Avenue between Ocean Avenue and Garfield Avenue. It is located four lots west of Garfield Avenue, approximately 225 feet. The subject property has 50 feet of frontage on Armstrong Avenue and is 110 feet deep, for a total lot area of 5,500 square feet. Lot 14 is currently a vacant lot after recently demolishing a 2.5-story, two-family residential building that was vacant, boarded up and in disrepair. Lot 13 is currently a vacant lot.

The purpose of this application is to develop the property with a new 4-story, 12-unit multi-family building. The ground floor will consist of a residential lobby, a 9-car parking garage, and 6-space wall mounted bicycle parking room. The 2nd-4th floors will each have four units per floor that consist of two 1-bedroom units and two 2-bedroom spaces. In total, the 12 units proposed will have a bedroom breakdown of six 1-bedroom units with an average unit size of 628 square feet and six 2-bedroom units with an average unit size of 965 square feet. One of the units will be a moderate income affordable housing unit. The project is proposing a 1,157-square-foot roof deck and an approximately 587-square-foot green roof along the front of the building.

In terms of the use variance, the subject property is particularly well-suited to accommodate the proposed multi-family building. The subject property is 5,500 square feet, which is significantly larger than the required 2,500-square-foot lot size in the R-1 District. As mentioned, the subject property is located between Ocean Avenue and Garfield Avenue, which are both larger thoroughfares in Jersey City. The proposed 12-unit residential building is also consistent with the number of units and density of other multi-family buildings in the surrounding area. The proposed 12 residential units on an 0.13-acre lot would calculate to a density of approximately 95 units per acre. Located one property south of the subject property is a 4.5 story, 22-unit residential building with a density of 151 units per acre at 11 Armstrong Avenue. On the next lot at 7 Armstrong Avenue is another 4.5 story, 22-unit residential building with a density of 176 units per acre. Located at 485, 487, and 491-495 Garfield Avenue

are three 5-story buildings with 17-units, 17-units and 22-units. These residential buildings have densities of approximately 147, 162, and 206 units per acre.

In addition, the subject property is approximately ¼ mile from the Richard Street Hudson Bergen Light Rail (HBLR) Station. Access to public transportation also supports higher density development on the subject property. Also, the proposed moderate income affordable housing unit is a benefit to the community.

In terms of the height variance, the subject property can accommodate the increased height of the proposed building and is consistent with other buildings within the surrounding area. The project is proposing a 4-story, 43-foot building height where a maximum of 3 stories and 30 feet is permitted for buildings with 9-foot floor-to-ceiling heights. As mentioned, the subject property is significantly larger than the required R-1 District lot size, which supports an increased building height. The multi-family buildings located at the south end of Block 25901 along Armstrong Avenue and Garfield Avenue are taller 4.5 and 5 story buildings, including basements that extend a ½ story above grade, which increases the overall building height. In addition, directly across Armstrong Avenue is a large surface parking lot for a 6-story building located on the corner of Garfield Avenue and Armstrong Avenue. Therefore, the proposed 4-story building is consistent in height with other multi-family buildings on Block 25901 and can accommodate the increased height without substantial impact to the adjacent properties.

The requested bulk “c” variances are applicable to one- and two-family buildings and therefore are subsumed within the use variance and can also be granted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70.c.(2), wherein the benefits of the proposed project would substantially outweigh any detriments. The project is proposing a 10-foot front yard setback where a 15 foot – 8-inch setback would be required to match the adjacent and predominant front yard setback of permitted buildings on the Block. It should be noted that the multi-family buildings at the corner of Block 25901 provide 0-foot front yard setbacks, however, the one- and two-family homes on the Block have approximate 15-foot front yard setbacks. The proposed 10-foot front yard setback is intended to provide consistency with the character of the streetscape in addition to not having any detriment on the adjacent properties. The project is required to provide a minimum rear yard setback of 24 feet – 4 inches and is proposing a 0-foot ground floor rear yard setback. The 0-foot rear yard setback is needed to provide for the garage parking spaces. Above the ground floor, the project is proposing a 20-foot rear yard step back for the 2nd-4th residential floors to allow for light and air between adjacent buildings and yards. The project is proposing a 89% lot coverage and 80% building coverage on the ground floor where a maximum lot coverage of 85% and building coverage of 60% is permitted. The 80% ground floor building coverage will allow for the proposed 9 parking space garage. In addition, the project is proposing approximately 587 square feet of green roofing and a storm sewer collection system in the ground floor parking garage that will help to mitigate any stormwater runoff impacts from the

deviation in lot and building coverage. Furthermore, the proposed building coverage on the 2nd-4th floors will be reduced to 64% with the proposed rear yard setback. The project is proposing a height of 14 feet – 10 inches for the elevator bulkhead, where a maximum of 10 feet is permitted for roof structures on buildings with a height up to 45 feet. The stair bulkheads all comply with the maximum height exemption and all the rooftop structures comply with the setback requirements. The elevator bulkhead height is necessary to provide elevator access to the roof deck.

Parking is not required on lots that are 50 feet or less in the R-1 District, and therefore no parking is required due to the subject property having a width of 50 feet. The project is however proposing 9 parking spaces in the ground floor parking garage to reduce any impacts the proposed multi-family building would have related to on-street parking demand. The minimum 18-foot – 2-inch, driveway aisle is the narrowest point in the garage and the typical drive aisle is 20-24 feet, which provides sufficient space for vehicles to maneuver. The project is also proposing six wall mounted bicycle spaces to meet the minimum bicycle space requirement. As mentioned, the subject property is approximately 0.3 miles from the Richard Street HBLR Station and therefore has a reduced parking dependency. In addition, the Ocean Avenue at Armstrong Avenue bus stop is approximately 0.1 miles from the subject property and provides access to the #6 and #81 NJ Transit bus lines. Although the project is proposing a new 10-foot curb cut, it will be removing an existing curb cut and is consistent with the maximum width requirement, and therefore will not have any impact on the on-street parking spaces along Armstrong Avenue.

The granting of the variances will advance the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law and promote the general welfare. Granting the requested variances will guide the appropriate use and development of the property in a manner that will promote the general welfare consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.a. through the provision of an appropriate multi-family building consistent with the surrounding area. The project is also proposing a density that is consistent with other multi-family buildings located in the surrounding area, and therefore is promoting the establishment of appropriate population densities and concentrations that will contribute to the well-being of persons, neighborhoods, communities; consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.e. The proposed project will promote a more desirable visual environment consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.i. by redeveloping the properties with a new multi-family building.

The granting of the variances will not result in a substantial detriment to the general welfare. The proposed project will significantly improve the vacant property with a new multi-family building. The proposed setbacks provide a building bulk that is consistent with the scale of the residential buildings in the surrounding area while also providing sufficient light and air on the adjacent properties. As mentioned, the project will be adding green roofing, a storm sewer collection system, off-street parking and will also a new street tree.

Granting the variances will likewise not result in a substantial detriment to the zoning ordinance or zone plan. The purposes of the R-1 District include “encouraging compatible in-fill development” and “preserving the integrity of residential neighborhoods.” The proposed 4-story, multi-family building is consistent in terms of density and scale with the multi-family buildings in the surrounding area. The proposed project also advances the Jersey City Master Plan by redeveloping the property, which will provide a unique, attractive, and high-quality residential area that will serve existing residents and attract new residents with a wide range of housing and life-style choices.

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