

Principal Points Statement

477 Ocean Avenue (Block 25101, Lot 22)
Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey

An application has been filed for the above noted property with the Jersey City Planning Board for approval of bulk “c” variances for maximum building coverage and rooftop structures. The project site is located in the Mixed Use A zone of the Turnkey Redevelopment Plan Area (Turnkey) District.

Project Description

The project site is identified as Lot 22 on Block 25101 and is located at the southeast corner of Ocean Avenue and Stegman Street. Lot 22 is 19.91 feet wide by 90.17 feet deep with a total area of 1,808.90 square feet. The property is currently improved with a two-story, mixed-use building and a four-car detached garage. The rear yard along the north side of the property abuts the side yard of the adjacent property along Stegman Street (Lot 21). The surrounding area consists of mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail, several multi-unit buildings, as well as one- and two-unit buildings. The project site is also within 0.3-miles of the Richard Street Station of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail and bus routes along Ocean Avenue.

The purpose of this application is to construct an addition to the existing buildings on the site, providing four dwelling units above the first-floor commercial space, and maintain the existing four off-street parking spaces. The project will construct a third story addition to the main building, a three-story addition at the rear, and a two-story addition over the detached garage. The additions will be connected, providing one continuous structure with two stories of residential over first floor commercial and garage.

Variances

The requested bulk “c” variances can be granted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40-55.D-70.c.(1) where by exceptional and undue hardship arising from the exceptional shape of this specific piece of property and/or pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70.c.(2), wherein the benefits of the proposed project would substantially outweigh any detriments. In addition, the Turnkey District allows for granting of variances where “by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape of a specific property would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties, or exceptional and undue hardship upon, the developer of such property.” The proposed project will improve the existing property by constructing an addition the existing mixed-use building and detached garage, providing a single, continuous structure in the Turnkey Redevelopment area.

Positive Criteria

Maximum Building Coverage: The proposed project seeks to renovate an existing two-story mixed-use building and provide four dwelling units over ground floor commercial in the Turnkey District. The proposed additions will increase the height by one story of the existing mixed-use building, construct a new three-story addition between the rear garage and the mixed-use building, and add two stories to the existing detached, one-story garage. In total, the new additions will increase the building coverage from the existing 84% to 100%, where 60% is permitted. The existing detached garage lies at the rear property line, providing a zero-foot rear setback, abutting the side yard of the property along Stegman Street. The new three-story addition essentially fills in the space between the two structures, providing a continuous building line along both streetscapes on Ocean Avenue and Stegman Street. The site is particularly suited for this use in that the existing building is a corner property, anchoring this section of Ocean Avenue. In addition, there are several corner properties in the vicinity with 100% building coverage. This includes but is not limited to properties located at:

- 479 Ocean Avenue (Block 25002, Lot 23)
- 481 Ocean Avenue (Block 25002, Lot 22)
- 483-485 Ocean Avenue (Block 25002, Lots 21 and 20)
- 492 Ocean Avenue (Block 24103, Lot 69)
- 486 Ocean Avenue (Block 24103, Lot 67)
- 466 Ocean Avenue (Block 25201, Lot 67)

The project will also provide two new street trees on Stegman Street as well as a bioswale between the two trees, which will help offset the additional building coverage and allow for stormwater infiltration.

Rooftop structures: The project proposes a rooftop appurtenance for the elevator shaft setback from the secondary front façade along Stegman Street of 6 feet where 9.75 feet is required. The project seeks relief due to exceptional narrowness of the lot, in order to provide the necessary housing for the stairwell and elevator to provide two means of ingress and egress to the residential floors of the building. The proposed appurtenance will be setback over 30' from the primary front façade but due to the narrowness of the lot, can only be set back 6' feet along the Stegman Street façade. The lot is 19 feet 8 inches wide where 25 feet is typical for parcels in the area. In addition, the rooftop will be covered with a white cool roof, thus reducing contribution to the urban heat island effect.

The granting of these variances will advance the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law and promote the general welfare. Granting the requested deviations 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 mixed-use building consistent with the character and density of the surrounding neighborhood. The project is also maintaining the ground floor retail and proposing a density that is consistent with the surrounding area, therefore 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 improvement will provide adequate light, air and open space consistent with N.J.S.A 40:55D-2.c. by maintaining existing front, rear and side yard setbacks. The project will also improve the existing structure to provide a consistent building line along both Ocean Avenue and Stegman Street and provide two new street trees and bioswale, contributing to a desirable visual environment consistent with N.J.S.A 40:55D-2.i.

Negative Criteria

The proposed project will not have a negative impact on the neighborhood or result in a substantial detriment to the general welfare. The proposed addition to the mixed-use building is consistent in terms of density with other uses in the area. The proposed project is on the northern corner of the block and therefore will not produce shadows that will negatively impact neighboring properties. The project does not negatively impact adjacent properties as it maintains the existing front, rear, and side yard setbacks and therefore will not increase the impacts the adjacent properties. While the project does request relief for the building coverage, the proposed improvement does not exacerbate the pre-existing conditions on the subject property. The addition between the two existing structures fills in the gap between the structures, providing a consistent building line and maintains the existing building line. The adjacent building to the rear of the property has no windows on the eastern façade abutting the subject property, and the proposed improvement is on the northeast corner of block, therefore the shadows cast by the proposed improvement will not have a negative impact on the adjacent properties.

Granting these deviations will likewise not result in a substantial impairment to the zoning ordinance or the zone plan. The project will provide renovated housing and three additional residential units which provides a diversity of housing options for the Turnkey District. The proposed project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Turnkey District, including:

Goals:

1. To comprehensively redevelop the Turnkey Project Area through selective restoration and rehabilitation of Existing residential uses, by the elimination of negative and blighting influences and by providing new construction and site improvements where appropriate.
2. To provide for a variety of residential uses and housing types for both existing residents and prospective occupants in order to meet the housing needs of low, moderate and upper income families.
5. To provide for the maximization of private investment through the attraction of qualified developers capable of securing private financing commitments.

6. To provide for the stabilization and the increase of the tax base of the project area and the entire city by redeveloping non-revenue producing areas and by reestablishing investment confidence of the part of existing and future residents both within the area and in contiguous neighborhoods.

Objectives:

3. To provide construction related (temporary) jobs, and permanent jobs through housing rehabilitation and construction of new housing and public improvements.

5. To provide necessary site improvements for both proposed and existing residential uses as well as commercial businesses, including new streets and sidewalks, street realignment, off-street parking, open space, recreational areas, new trees and selected planting materials where necessary.

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