




Memorandum

DATE: April 2, 2020

TO: Members of the Plainfield Planning Board

FROM: Malvika Apte, PP, AICP 
Planning Board Planner

CC: Rosalind Miller, Planning/Zoning Board Secretary
Peter Vignuolo, Esq.
Drew M. Di Sessa, PE, PP, CME
Valerie Jackson, Director, Department of Economic Development
John J. Sullivan, Jr. - Applicant's Attorney
Jeffrey A Martell, PE - Applicant's Engineer

RE: *Planning Review # 2*
Application # PB 2019-17
Applicant: Atul Sethi and Pavneet Sachdeva
1052 East 2nd Street
Block 410, Lot 1
Zone: NC Neighborhood Commercial District

FILE NO.: HPFP0410.01

Applicant has submitted revised drawings in connection to this application. As per your request our office has reviewed the following documents in connection with the above mentioned application:

1. Thirteen (13) sheets of Site Plan drawings titled "Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan for 1052 East 2nd Street Proposed Mixed Use" prepared by Stonefield Engineering & Design, dated July 11, 2019, last revised March 6, 2020;
2. Five (5) sheets of Architectural Plans and Elevations titled "Proposed Adaptive Reuse into a Mixed Use Development" prepared by Pereiras Architects Ubiquitous, dated July 2019 and last revised March 18, 2020;
3. One (1) sheet of site rendering prepared by Pereiras Architects Ubiquitous.

We offer the following comments for Board's consideration:

1. Proposed Application

The applicant has revised its proposal and is now seeking a site plan approval to convert the existing one- story masonry building into a two (2) story mixed use building containing retail on the first floor and two apartments on the second floor. The previous plan proposed a three story mixed use building with first floor commercial use, second floor office use and third floor for residential use.



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The proposed building will include approximately 3,445 square feet of Gross Floor Area on first floor used as retail space and entrance lobby to the apartments. The two residential units on second floor will consist of three (3) three-bedroom units; 1,440 square feet and 1,723 square feet. Other than vertical addition, the proposal also includes a 74 square foot addition on the ground floor located in the rear of the building.

The existing one story building is located on the southern corner of the lot with frontage on East Second Street. The proposed retail stores are currently shown as three retail space but can be modified based on tenant demand. The entrance to the retail store shall be provided from East Second Street. Entrance to the residential units shall be provided from entrance from parking lot.

A total of thirteen (13) on-site parking spaces are proposed. Of the proposed thirteen (13) spaces, twelve (12) will be 9 feet by 18 feet and one ADA accessible space will be 11 feet by 18 feet.

The proposed parking lot is to be located north of the existing/proposed building. The parking lot will be accessed via the site's Netherwood Avenue frontage. The parking lot will also contain a trash enclosure placed on a concrete pad, which will be located adjacent to the building's northern façade.

2. Completeness

The application was deemed complete by the Board at the last public hearing on February 20, 2020.

3. Subject Site and Surrounding Land Uses

This section is reiterated from our previous memorandum dated February 6, 2020.

The subject site, identified as Block 410, Lot 1 is a corner lot located at the intersection of Netherwood Avenue and East Second Street. The site is approximately 0.20 acres in size with approximately 73 feet of frontage along Netherwood Avenue and approximately 154 feet of frontage along East Second Street.

The site is currently developed with a one story commercial building that is currently vacant and in a state of disrepair. The existing building is located on the southern corner of the property. The northern portion of the property is fenced in and is currently pervious grass area.

NJDEP's GeoWeb application did not identify any environmental concerns on the site. The subject property is located within a Special Flood Hazard Area, which is identified as Zone AO.

The subject property is primarily surrounded by commercial and mixed-use buildings located to north, south, and west, along Second Street. There are one and two-family residences located to the east of the site.



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4. Zoning and Bulk Review

- a. *Use:* The subject property is located in the NC (Neighborhood Commercial) Zone district. Mixed use residential dwellings, retail are permitted uses in the NC (Neighborhood Commercial) Zone district. The applicant has revised the plan and is no longer proposing the three story structure and the office use is no longer proposed.

For the proposed approximately 3,455 square feet of retail space, the applicant should define the type of retail use anticipated on site. The ordinance permits a variety of retail uses, including but not limited to, personal service establishments, art gallery, and restaurants. Currently the floor plan proposes to divide the retail area into three stores. The applicant should provide testimony on adaptability of this retail space to accommodate the varied type of permitted uses based on type of tenants anticipated for this area.

- b. *Bulk Regulations:* The following table notes the bulk regulations permitted per the redevelopment plan and provides the proposed developments compliance/non-compliance with the regulations:

Bulk Regulations (NC Neighborhood Commercial Zone District)			
	Requirement	Existing	Proposed
Minimum Lot Area	5,000 sq. ft.	8,596 sq. ft.	8,596 sq. ft.
Maximum Density	25 du / per acre	N/A	10 du/ per acre
Minimum Lot Width	50 feet	73.15 feet	73.15 feet
Minimum Lot Frontage - Principal Use			
Netherwood Avenue	50 feet	73.15 feet	73.15 feet
East Second Street	50 feet	154.45 feet	154.45 feet
Minimum Lot Depth	100 feet	152 feet +/-	152 feet +/-
Minimum Front Yard Setback			
Netherwood Avenue	0 feet	0 feet	0 feet
East Second Street	0 feet	77	77
Minimum Rear Yard Setback - Principal Use	10 feet	0 feet (E)	0 feet (V)
Minimum Side Yard Setback - One/ both	0 feet / 0 feet	0 feet	0 feet
Minimum Number of Stories	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maximum Number of Stories - Principal Use	3 stories	1 story	2 stories
Maximum Building Height - Principal Use	35 feet	< 35 feet	26.66 feet
Maximum Percent Building Cover - Principal Use	60%	39.2%	40.1%
Maximum Percent Total Lot Cover - Principal Use	80%	48.5%	94.5% (V)
Maximum Floor Area Ratio	1.8	0.39	0.80
Min. Improvable Area (M.I.A)	2,700 sq. ft.	6,767 sq. ft.	6,767 sq. ft.
M.I.A Diameter of Circle	36 feet	69 feet	69 feet

(V) Variance (E) Existing Non-conforming Condition



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5. Supplementary Regulations

a. Buffering and Screening:

- (i) **§17:9-24 B:** Nonresidential uses require buffering width of 10 feet and height of screening shall be 6 feet. No buffering and landscaped screening is proposed. **A variance is required.**
- (ii) **§17:9-24 C 1:** All driveways and parking lots shall have buffering of 10 feet when adjacent to residential use and surrounding all sides of a parking lot. A 0.5 foot setback is proposed from residential use and none from the front property line. **A variance is required.**
- (iii) **§17:9-24 C 2:** Screening of minimum 6 feet high visually impervious screen should be provided. A 6 foot high board on board fence is proposed along the residential use. This variance is no longer required.

b. Flood damage prevention:

- (i) **§17:9-30:** We defer to the City's flood plain manager on the proposed site's compliance with this section.

c. Parking, driveways and loading:

- (i) **§17:9-42 E:** Parking lots shall be prohibited in any required side yard setback area or front yard area. The proposed parking lot is located within the subject property's front yard. **A variance is required.**
- (ii) **§17:9-42 H:** Curb cuts for 20 foot wide driveways shall be a maximum of 26 feet wide. The curb cuts for the proposed driveway is 24 feet. A variance is no longer required.
- (iii) **§17:9-42 J:** The following off-street parking requirements are required for the subject property.

Off-Street Parking Requirement		
Use	Required	Proposed
Three-bedroom apartment	2.1 spaces / unit = 2.1 x 2 = 4 spaces	
Retail	1 space per 300 square feet of gross floor area = 3,445 square feet / 300 = 11.48 or 11 parking spaces	
Total	15 spaces	13 spaces (V)

- (iv) **§17:9-42 P:** In all zone districts parking lots or individual spaces shall be prohibited within front yard areas. No other front yard parking is permitted. The proposed parking lot is



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located with the subject property's front yard. Since the property is a corner lot, parking is located in a front yard. **A variance is required.**

(v) **§17:9-42 R:** Use and occupancy of any structure containing two or more residential dwellings units is subject to and conditioned upon an equitable distribution of off-street accessory parking spaces among those occupying the structure. Applicant should discuss how the parking spaces shall be distributed.

(vi) **§17:9-11B:** An aisle width of 24 feet is required for perpendicular parking spaces, 22 feet is proposed. **A waiver is required.**

d. Parking lot landscaping:

(i) **§17:9-43 B:** For parking lots with eleven (11) or more spaces, a minimum of five percent (5%) of interior area is required to be landscaped. This amounts to 1,773 square feet. Applicant is proposing a 680 square feet of landscaping around the parking lot, **a variance however, is still required.** Further, the section requires one (1) deciduous tree for every five (5) spaces, the proposal would require three (3) deciduous trees. The trees that are provided along East Second Street are Shade trees and not part of this requirement. **A variance is required.** Applicant is proposing a variety of evergreen shrubs in the landscaped area.

e. Residential dwelling units:

(i) **§17:9-48 A 1:** Per the revised proposal, applicant is still proposing two (2) three-bedroom apartments on the second floor. Per the ordinance, a three bedroom unit requires a minimum of 1,100 square feet. One of the apartment is 1,440 square feet and the other a three bedroom with den is 1,723 square feet. We recommend that the closet and door from the den be removed for the same to be used as a den and not a bedroom. Applicant should discuss the maintenance and operation of these apartments including refuse and recycling management for all the uses.

f. Shade Trees:

(i) **§17:9-49C A:** Plant Placement and Shade Trees. We defer to the Shade tree commission on the requirement of the number location of trees. Per the Commission a minimum of five (5) medium shade trees are to be planted along the street. The revised plans show three (3) shade trees to be planted along East Second Street. The Shade Tree recommends donation of \$300.00 per tree not provided.

h. Signage:

(i) **§17:9-53:** The revised plans shows three (3) wall signs along the Second Avenue frontage and two (2) wall signs along the Netherwood Avenue Frontage. In addition, one (1)



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residential signs to mark the entrance to the unit, along the Netherwood Avenue frontage is proposed. The following is noted:

	Required	Proposed
Wall Signs		
Number of Signs	One per ground floor business	3
	Store that have entryways at the rear side of the building (facing parking lot) may have up to 2 wall signs total	2 (V)
Material Permitted	Metal Framed or Wood Framed with aluminum substrates	Metal Extruded Letters
Total Area of Sign East Second Street Netherwood Ave	10% of total façade area = 231 sq. ft. 10% of total façade area = 177 sq. ft.	41.62 sq. ft. 9.75 sq. ft.
Maximum height of wall sign	2 feet	1.5 feet
Maximum projection from wall face	9 inches	TBD
Maximum Mounting Height	Ground floor or 14 feet whichever is less	7 feet
Illumination	Exterior light fixtures (gooseneck)	Gooseneck lighting
Colors	No more than 3 colors on a single sign	One color
Residential Identification Sign		
Number of signs	No requirement	1
Area of Sign	No requirement	3.9 sq. ft.

6. Design Standards:

a. Buildings – architectural/nonresidential standards:

(i) **§17:11-7 H:** Applicant has proposed the HVAC system on the roof. Per the architectural plan, these condensers are not visible from the street. **This complies.**

b. Buildings – architectural/nonresidential standards:

(i) **§17:11-8 B 3:** Adjacent dwelling units in the same building shall be adjoined in such a manner as to provide maximum soundproofing and privacy between such units. **The applicant should provide confirmation of compliance with the design standard.**

(ii) **§17:11-8 B 8:** Each dwelling unit shall be provided with a completely enclosed, covered storage space consisting of a minimum of 350 cubic feet. Storage room is provided in the basement of the building. **This complies.**

(iii) **§17:11-9 B 10 b:** Each dwelling unit is required to have 64 square feet of outdoor balcony space. With the revised plans, there is no outdoor balcony space proposed. **A waiver is required.**



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c. Landscaping:

- (i) **§17:11-11 A:** Landscaping. A landscaping plan shall be prepared by a New Jersey Certified landscape architect. The provided plan is prepared by an Architect. **A waiver is required.**
- (ii) **§17:11-11 F:** The developer shall be required to replace dead or dying plant material for a period of 2 years from the date of release of the performance guaranty and shall post a maintenance guaranty for such pursuant to Article XIII of this chapter. If plant material is dead or dying during a planting season, it shall be replaced that same season. If plant material is dead or dying during a nonplanting season, it shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably possible at the start of the next planting season. **A note stating the same should be provided.**

d. Lighting:

The revised lighting plan shows a total of three (3) wall mounted lights, two along East Second Street and one along Netherwood Avenue. One (1) free standing light is proposed along the East Second Street, is proposed to be 25 feet high. **The proposed illumination levels for the parking lots and pedestrian areas comply.**

e. Refuse and recycling areas:

- (i) **§17:11-16 A 1:** A minimum 10 foot buffering and 6 foot high masonry wall screening is required along the proposed refuse area. A 6 foot high masonry wall is proposed, however no buffering area is proposed. The intent to screen the enclosure is met. **A waiver is required.**
- (ii) **§17:11-16 A 3:** Refuse area shall be placed on a concrete pad separated from the parking area via a curb set back a minimum of 2 feet. **A waiver is required.**

7. Master Plan

The 2009 City of Plainfield Master Plan and Master Plan Reexamination report identifies this property within the Neighborhood Commercial Zone District. The intent of this zone is intended to permit uses necessary for satisfaction of daily needs of residents, such as personal services, grocery stores, drug stores, and convenience stores that primarily serve neighborhoods nearby.

It is also important to note, this site was part of a redevelopment study, however no redevelopment plan for this site or the area was adopted.

The applicant should provide testimony regarding the consistency of the proposed use with the City of Plainfield Master Plan.



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8. Planning Comments

1. The applicant shall provide testimony justifying the bulk variances and waivers to the Board's satisfaction.
2. The applicant should provide detailed testimony on daily operations of the building, including security measures for the residential dwellings, how the refuse and recycling is operated, and full-time management or maintenance on site.
3. The applicant should indicate whether the residents will have designated parking spaces.
4. The applicant should identify whether any loading activity will occur within the off-street parking lot or on-street.
5. The applicant should confirm the location of the mailboxes for the residential dwellings.
6. Per the adopted Streetscape Design Manual of the City of Plainfield, it is suggested that these design standards be applied in the Neighborhood Commercial Zone at the discretion of the Planning Board. Due to the scale of the proposed building it is suggested that some of these street scape elements, such as addition of planting beds, tree grates along the proposed street, and trees be provided. Applicant should discuss this with the Board.
7. We defer to Board Engineer regarding drainage, stormwater, utilities, traffic impact, and other engineering issues related to the site.
8. The applicant should be prepared to discuss whether any additional permits/approvals are required by outside agencies.

9. Statutory Criteria

Bulk Variances: These are commonly known as C variances. The Board has the power to grant c (1) hardship variance or a c (2) benefits vs. detriments variance.

An applicant requesting a c(1) variance must show that (a) by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of a specific piece of property or (b) by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or physical features uniquely affecting a specific piece of property or (c) by reason of an extraordinary and exceptional situation uniquely affecting a specific piece of property or structure lawfully existing thereon, the strict application of any would result in particular and exceptional practical difficulties or undue hardship upon the developer of such property.

An applicant requesting a c (2) variance must prove that granting of the variance will advance the intent and purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law and that benefits of granting of the variance will substantially outweigh the detriments.



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In both, negative criteria must be addressed. No variance may be granted without showing that such a variance can be granted without substantial detriment to public good and will not substantially impair the intent and purpose of the zone plan and zoning ordinance.

If you should have any questions with regard to the above matter, please do not hesitate to call.

MA:jr