



City of Stamford
Zoning Board

STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY OF STAMFORD ZONING BOARD
FROM: VINEETA MATHUR, ASSOCIATE PLANNER
SUBJECT: **ZB #221-17, Special Permit and Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses, 525-535 Hope Street**
DATE: July 06, 2021
MASTER PLAN: Master Plan Category 7 (Commercial Arterial)
ZONING: M-G (General-Industrial)

Introduction

The “Applicants” Lodato Properties LLC and Hope Street Storage LLC are requesting Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Use and Special Permit pursuant to Section 19.H (Former Section 7.5) Large Scale Development to allow a new three story self-storage facility at 523-535 Hope Street.

Site and Surroundings

The site comprises of two parcels 523 Hope Street and 535 Hope Street and has its entrance at the intersection of Hope Street and Toms Road. The site is approximately 2.5 acre in size. The site was previously occupied by the longtime business United House Wrecking (salvage and antique store). The site is mostly paved and is occupied by two vacant buildings and a large parking area which also served as display/storage of outdoor furniture and décor of the former business. The area to the west is occupied by single family houses to the south of Toms Road and Dolan Middle School ball fields to the north of Toms Road. The area to the south of the site is occupied by a shopping center. The site is bordered by the New Canaan branch of the Metro North train line. The area to the north of the site is an industrial dry cleaning business. A secondary curb cut (blocked) is located on the northerly end of the property. The zoning in the surrounding area includes R-5 and RM-1 to the west, C-N to the south and M-G to the north and east.

Proposed Development

The Applicants proposes to develop the site with a three story self-storage facility comprising 132,399 sq.ft. (1.25 F.A.R.) and 34 parking spaces. The periphery of the site will be landscaped with a mix of flowering shrubs and trees. A pedestrian plaza area is proposed on the south west corner of the site including two benches around a tree and walking path. The area will be landscaped to provide an inviting seating area. The Applicant will also replace the concrete sidewalk along Hope Street, north of the vehicular entrance.

The site will have a retaining wall along the north and east property line and a portion of the southerly property line. The Applicant also proposes an aluminum railing along the north, east and south side.

Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses

The proposed plan meets all the zoning standards for the M-G zoning district and exceeds the required yard setbacks. The proposed lot coverage is 42% where 80% lot coverage is permitted. The building will contain both internally and externally accessed storage units.

The building materials include brick on the ground floor along Hope Street frontage of the building and wrapping around the corners. The remaining ground floor frontage will be smooth faced CMU painted to match the brick. The upper levels will be EIFS material painted in light yellow shades. The elevation includes stone and metal bands as accents as well as canopies on the west and east elevation. The northwest and southwest corners of the building will have glass windows and surrounded by a brighter yellow EIFS.

Vehicular Access

The access to the site will be from a single curb cut at the intersection of Hope Street and Toms Road. The driveway continues around the building allowing access to storage units as well as parking spaces. The Application was filed prior to the revisions to Section 12 Mobility and therefore is not subject to the additional requirements for landscaping of parking area, bike spaces or electric charging spaces.

Special Permits

A Special Permit under the Large Scale Development Review (Section 19.E) is required because the project will exceed the floor area threshold (40,000 sq.ft.) under this section. The Applicants have submitted a Statement of Findings as required under Section 19.E. Staff supports the Special Permit which will allow the self-storage use in an industrially zoned property. Given the low traffic volume expected at this use, the development is not anticipated to have any adverse impact on the neighborhood.

Referral Comments

Stamford Planning Board

The Stamford Planning Board, during its regularly scheduled meeting held on Tuesday May 11, 2021 recommended approval of the applications for Special Permit, Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses Applications and found the request to be compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #7 (Commercial-Arterial). The Planning Board recommended additional trees and a park bench on the south side of the property. These have been incorporated in the updated plans.

City of Stamford Engineering Bureau

In a letter dated May 3, 2021, Susan Kiskan, Coordinator of Site Plan Reviews and Inspections at the Engineering Bureau, made technical comments on the application to be addressed prior to Building Permit.

Fire Marshall

Fire Marshall Walter Seely in an email dated April 23, 2021 stated that he had no objections with the project moving forward.

Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau

Frank Petise, Acting Bureau Chief, Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau provided a letter dated July 2, 2021 stated that the traffic generation at the proposed facility will be similar to the existing use and recommended that the Applicants contribute towards traffic signal improvements in the vicinity of the site. Staff recommends that the Zoning Board make these recommendations a condition of approval for the development.

Buildings Department

Bharat Gami, Chief Building Official in a letter dated April 29, 2021 provided comments on the building design to ensure compliance with the building code.

Summary

Staff recommends approval of Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses and Special Permit which will allow reuse of the large vacant site with a low intensity use. Staff recommends that the Applicant contribute towards traffic signal improvements as suggested by the Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau.