



City of Stamford
Zoning Board

STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY OF STAMFORD ZONING BOARD
FROM: VINEETA MATHUR, ACTING PRINCIPAL PLANNER
SUBJECT: ZB #221-23, 36 Ann Street, Special Permit and Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses
DATE: September 21, 2021

MASTER PLAN: Master Plan Category 4 (Residential – Medium Density Multifamily)

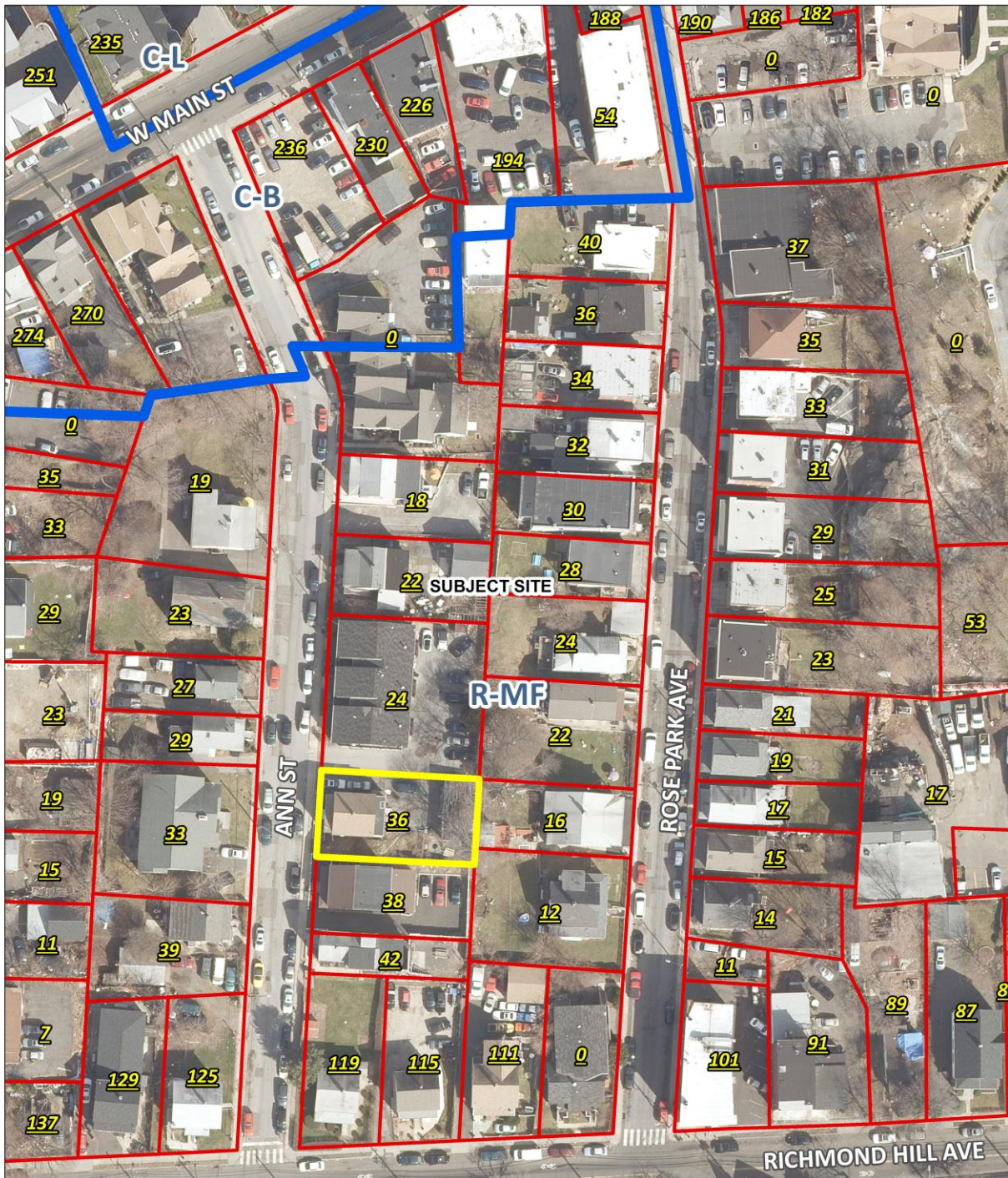
ZONING: R-MF (Residential Multifamily)

Introduction

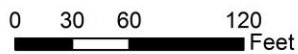
The applicant Pacific House requests approval of a Special Permit (Pursuant to Section 7.3) and Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses Application for 36 Ann Street for Critical Reconstruction of the building which existed on the site along with an addition. The site is located in the West Side neighborhood of Stamford. The proposed use is supportive housing (3 units) for persons with disabilities and special needs operated by the Pacific House.

Site and Surroundings

The Site is approximately 5000 sq.ft. in size and is currently vacant. It is located on the east side of Ann Street between West Main Street and Richmond Hill Avenue. It was formerly occupied by a two family home. The building was constructed in circa 1905 and had been blighted before being demolished in 2020. The property to the north, 38 Ann Street is also used as supportive housing by Pacific House. A rest of Ann Street is occupied by a mix of two story row-houses and detached multi-family and single family buildings. The zoning along Ann Street is R-MF and changes to C-B for the properties fronting West Main Street.



221--23
36 Ann Street



Date: 9/20/2021



Proposed Development

The applicant is proposing a ‘Critical Reconstruction’ per definition in Section 3 and construct a new building with three supportive housing units. The proposed building will follow the front and side setbacks of the former building but will be deeper than the former building in order to allow the construction of the three units.

The definition of ‘Critical Reconstruction’ is as follows:

Critical Reconstruction projects are infill *Developments* in areas developed prior to the effective date of these Regulations (November 30, 1951). The goal of *Critical Reconstruction* is to maintain or restore the fabric of the neighborhood by permitting buildings and building typologies that have or may have been historically extant and are contextual in bulk and other characteristics with the neighborhood context.

The former building at 36 Ann Street was constructed in the year 1905 as per research by Nils Kerschus. Ann Street retains many of the buildings (18, 19, 22, 23, 39 and 42 Ann Street) which were constructed in the early 1900s however they have since been modified to meet the needs of the residents. The proposed elevation (revised on September 17, 2021) of 36 Ann Street is of ‘Vernacular Style’ which is seen reflected in the other buildings of the same vintage. The proposed ‘Queen Anne’ style elevation in the original submission is present in the neighborhood (e.g. 104-110 Richmond Hill Avenue) but not seen on Ann Street and therefore not the preferred option. The Vernacular style has simpler details as compared to the more decorative Queen Anne style.

Allowing the Critical Reconstruction will contribute towards restoring key architectural elements which defined Ann Street as well as the neighborhood.

Restoration of existing buildings at 20-28 Fairfield Avenue through the use of Historic Preservation bonuses provides an example of the positive impact of the restoration on the street.

Cultural Resources Inventory Addition

The applicant seeks to add the proposed building to the Stamford Cultural Resources inventory. Critical Reconstruction buildings are added as a sub-category within the inventory. The proposed addition will be an important resource as future buildings are renovated and constructed.

Landscape Plan

The application includes a landscape plan which proposes foundation planting around the proposed building, lawn areas, perimeter planting as well as five trees. The proposed landscaping is both aesthetic as well as functional in creating a pleasant open space for the residents of the buildings.

Parking

The applicant has proposed a shared parking arrangement with the neighboring property 38 Ann Street which is also occupied by three units of supportive housing. The two properties will be connected by a walkway in the rear yard. There will be a total of 3 parking spaces for the 6 supportive housing units which meets the parking requirement in Table 12.7. of 0.33 per unit. The parking requirement was based on the low car ownership by tenants of deeply affordable and supportive housing tenants. Currently only one of the residents of 38 Ann Street has a vehicle. Shared parking between the two buildings will allow a better layout for 36 Ann Street allowing for the creation of landscaped open spaces for use by the occupants.

Special Permits

The Applicant requests a Special Permit pursuant to Section 7.3 for bonuses including the following:

Bonus Density

The applicant seeks bonus density pursuant to Section 7.3.C.4.a (Development Standards – density) to allow 3 dwelling units instead of 2.5 units derived based on the lot area of the property. Where 6 or fewer dwelling units are allowed as-of-right, a fifty percent increase in density is permitted.

Lot Coverage

Pursuant to the standards in Section 7.3.C.4.g, the Applicant has proposed 32.2% lot coverage instead of the 30% coverage permitted as of right. The previously existing building at the site utilized 34% building coverage. The maximum increase of lot coverage by 25% is permissible through this bonus provision.

The Applicant has provided a Statement of Findings in support for this Special Permit application. Staff recommends approval of the Special Permit requests which support the Critical Reconstruction.

Referral Comments

Stamford Planning Board

The Stamford Planning Board, during its regularly scheduled meeting held on June 21, 2021 recommended approval of the applications and found the request to be compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #4 (Residential-Medium Density Multifamily).

Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau

In a letter dated July 5, 2021, Frank Petise reviewed the application and expressed support for the low intensity use. He also asked for information on the parking usage of 38 Ann Street. The applicant has noted to staff that only one of the occupants of 38 Ann Street owns a vehicle.

City of Stamford Engineering Bureau

In a letter dated June 22, 2021, Susan Kiskien, Coordinator of Site Plan Reviews and Inspections at the Engineering Bureau, made technical comments on the application to be addressed prior to a Building Permit. She noted that the proposal will result in the reduction of impervious surface and removal of a curb cut.

Fire Marshall

In an email dated June 24, 2021 Walter Seely, Fire Marshall asked for clarification regarding the sprinkler system and the fire alarm system and stated that he had no objections to the application. The Applicant noted that they will provide the details of the sprinkler system and the fire alarm system as part of the building permit plans.

Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

The Historic Preservation Advisory Commission during its regularly scheduled meeting held on August 10, 2021 recommended approval of the requested bonuses under Section 7.3 and the addition to the Critical Resources Inventory. They requested the applicant to revise the elevation to simplify the façade to better match the context.

Summary

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Special Permit, Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses applications which will allow the Critical Reconstruction of a historic building and provide a vital social service through the provision of supportive housing.