



City of Stamford Zoning Board

STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY OF STAMFORD ZONING BOARD
FROM: VINEETA MATHUR, ACTING PRINCIPAL PLANNER
SUBJECT: ZB #221-26, West Avenue Industrial LLC, 419A West Avenue
DATE: November 9, 2021
MASTER PLAN: Master Plan Category 13 (Industrial-General)
ZONING: M-G (General Industrial District)

Introduction

The applicant West Avenue Industrial, LLC requests the approval of Special Permit and Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses applications to allow the redevelopment of a portion of the industrial complex at 419- 650 West Avenue. The Applicant proposes to demolish a 70,000 sq.ft. building located at 419A and construct a new 74,891 sq.ft. building in its place.

Background

The industrial and office complex 419-650 West Avenue comprises of three buildings. The Buildings 419A and 419B were constructed in 1980 and 650 West Avenue was constructed in 1998. Buildings 419A and 419B are connected via a skybridge. The buildings have since been used for a variety of industrial purposes. The buildings at 419A is now outdated and needs replacement to continue to serve industrial businesses.

Site and Surroundings

The site comprises a total of 15.5 acres and is located in the Waterside neighborhood abutting the Town of Greenwich. The western portion of the property is in a Conservation Area comprising of woods, wetlands and bogs. To the east of the property is the U.S.P.S. distribution center. To the north are a variety of heavy commercial businesses including Stamford Office Furniture Company, Murray Electric Supply Company and Westy's Self Storage. To the south of the

property is a go-carting facility RPM Raceways. The Zoning designation in the surrounding is M-G and M-D district.

Special Permit

The proposed development is subject to a Special Permit under the Large Scale Development regulations in Section 19.E and 19.C.2 given that more than 40,000 sq.ft. of property will be altered. A statement of findings has been provided by the applicant for the findings under Section 19.C.2.

Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing building 419A and the connector to 419B. A new two story building will be constructed generally in the same location with a wider footprint. The new building will have a more rectangular footprint vs. the existing building which was built in a saw-tooth shape. Although the zig-zag footprint gave a unique appearance to the existing building, it proved to be not very functional for industrial uses. The proposed regular shape lends itself to easy partitioning for potentially multiple users.

The site is substantially underbuilt based on the permitted development rights (FAR and coverage) given the large area dedicated to conservation of natural resources. The proposed redevelopment does not affect any of the protected area.

The proposed building will use high quality grey metal panels wrapping around the building with the corner and entrances emphasized with projected panels with a darker grey color. The portion of the building surrounding the loading area will have the CMU material. Upon discussions with staff the applicant has made architectural enhancements since the original submission including addition of aluminum canopies at the entrances increasing the projection of the accent metal panels and raising the height of the wrapped corner panel to provide additional contrast.

The building 650 West Avenue is proposed to remain as such and 419B will receive minor alterations subject to a Building Permit.

Parking and Pedestrian Safety

The applicant will be modifying the existing driveway and parking area as necessary to align with the new building configuration. The number of parking spaces will be reduced from 286 to 208 parking spaces. A total of 149 parking spaces are required to meet the zoning requirement.

The applicant made several modifications to the site plan to address comments from Land Use Bureau staff and Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau Staff to enhance vehicular and pedestrian safety. These include addition of speed bumps along the main driveway, addition of

crosswalks, relocating electric charging stations in a more functional location, addition of curb-stops, addition of a sidewalk connecting to existing sidewalk on West Avenue among several other safety improvements. TTP also requested the Applicant to contribute towards traffic signal improvements at the intersection of West Avenue and Selleck Street. The applicant has agreed to contribute \$10,000 towards traffic safety improvements at this intersection.

Referral Comments

Stamford Planning Board

The Stamford Planning Board, during its regularly scheduled meeting held on October 19, 2020 recommended approval of the applications and found the request to be compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #13 (Industrial - General).

Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau

The Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau in a letter dated October 15, 2021 provided comments including sidewalk, parking and driveway improvements. The applicant addressed the comments in a letter dated October 27, 2021.

City of Stamford Engineering Bureau

In a letter dated October 29, 2021, Susan Kiskin, Coordinator of Site Plan Reviews and Inspections at the Engineering Bureau made several technical comments. The applicant provided a response in a letter dated November 5, 2021 and the civil plans were updated to address the comments.

Building Department

In a letter dated October 19, 2021, Bharat Gami, Chief Building Official provided preliminary comments to be addressed at the time of Building Permit.

Summary

Staff recommends approval of the Special Permit and Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses application which will facilitate the redevelopment and modernization of the industrial property. This redevelopment will be beneficial for the Stamford's economy by providing a state of the art industrial building for a variety of business.