



City of Stamford
Zoning Board

STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY OF STAMFORD ZONING BOARD
FROM: VINEETA MATHUR, PRINCIPAL PLANNER
SUBJECT: **ZB #223-01 Wings Manager LLC & Continental Family Holdings, LLC, 50 Barry Place, Special Permit, Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses**
DATE: February 24, 2023

MASTER PLAN: Master Plan Category 13 (Industrial - General)

ZONING: M-G (General Industrial)

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

223-01	Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses pursuant to 4.B.8.b and 19.D Special Permit pursuant to 19.E	Proposed 35,500 sf ice hockey rink with 240 seats and 87 parking spaces. Large Scale Development of a non-residential structure with gross floor area greater than 20,000 sf
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Introduction

The Applicants Wings Manager, LLC (f/k/a Wings Real Estate Holdings, LLC, (hereinafter “Wings”) and Continental Family Holdings, LLC are requesting the approval of related applications including Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses and Special Permit to facilitate the development of an ice skating rink at 50 Barry Place. A subdivision application was approved by the Planning Board on February 21, 2023 subdividing the previous 11.77-acre parcel into Parcel A (9.17 acres) and Parcel B (2.60 acres).

Background

The property 50 Barry place encompasses 11.77 acres and is located in the Waterside neighborhood of Stamford approximately 700 feet from the Greenwich border. The property currently has three buildings built between 1939 and 1950, two of which were occupied by Conair until 2020. The proposed ice skating rink will be located on 2.6-acre Parcel B.

Site and Surroundings

The site is mostly paved with some landscaped areas surrounding the parking area. The Innis Arden golf course is located to its west and south of the property. The site is bound by the Metro North Railroad to the north. The area to the east of the site is occupied by a variety of industrial and warehouse uses north of Melrose Place. The area to the east of the site and south of Melrose place is occupied by one and two family homes and supporting uses including a church, private school and an athletics facility.

The grade varies throughout the site with the northern eastern portions of the site being at a highest elevation and sloping down towards the west and south.

Proposed Development

The Applicant proposes to construct a 35,500 sf structure on Parcel B to house the ice skating rink. The operator Wings plans to operate youth ice hockey and youth figure skating clinics, educational programs, leagues, and tournaments at the venue serving Stamford and the neighboring communities. The two existing buildings on Parcel B are proposed to be demolished.

The following approvals are needed to facilitate the development:

Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses

A site and architectural plan and requested uses approval is sought pursuant to Section 4.B.8.b. and 19.D. The site will be regraded to allow the construction of the new building, parking areas and landscaping. A retaining wall is proposed along the portions of the site periphery.

The proposed building is a rectangular metal structure with a sloping metal roof. The applicant is encouraged to consider solar panels on the roof. The metal siding is proposed to be ash grey color. The entrance to the arena is emphasized by using glass extending to the second level and a curved canopy. Staff also recommends that the applicant utilize paint to enliven the façade through a simple pattern/mural. The building will not be visible from any street.

The existing 8' high chain link fence along the border with Metro North is proposed to be replaced with a new chain link fence of the same height. Applicant should clarify if a fence or other edge treatment is proposed along the western edge of the property.

Access

The access driveway is located on the southern end of Parcel B along the north side of the primary building on Parcel A and will be renovated as part of the development. A portion of the building on Parcel A will also be demolished for the reconstruction of this driveway.

Parking

The Applicant proposes a total of 87 parking spaces which exceeds the parking requirement. One (1) parking space per four (4) seats or 1 space per 500 sf of floor area, whichever is greater is required resulting in a requirement of 71 spaces for the 35,500 sf, 240 seat rink. A total of ten (10) electric vehicles are proposed and located along the southern edge of the proposed building and covered bike racks are proposed at the entrance of the building.

The parking data including the EV and bike spaces should be incorporated in the Zoning Data chart prior to the building permit.

Landscaping and Open Space

The proposed landscape plans include perimeter landscaping, planted islands in the parking areas and landscaping along the eastern property boundary.

Staff recommends additional plantings to be added in the following areas if feasible:

- Along the eastern edge of the proposed building.
- Landscaped area around the concrete chiller pad.
- Ground shrubs around the Pin Oaks proposed in the curved planted islands in the parking areas.

The dimension of the perimeter landscape strip along the western property boundary should be included in the landscape plans to ensure adequate width for the survival of the proposed Honey Locust trees.

Traffic directional arrows and lane demarcation lines should be incorporated into the landscape plan for consistency across plans.

A complete photometric plan should be provided prior to a Building Permit showing adequacy of site lighting. Additional light poles may be needed along the southern border of the parking area.

Special Permit

A Special Permit pursuant to Section 19.E (Large Scale Development Review) is requested to facilitate the project given that non-residential floor area greater than 20,000 sf is proposed. The Applicant has provided a Statement of Findings to support the request.

Referral Comments

Stamford Planning Board

The Stamford Planning Board, during its regularly scheduled meeting held on February 7, 2023 recommended approval of the applications for Special Permit and Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses and found the request to be compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #13 (Industrial - General) and the following Master Plan policies.

Fire Marshall

Fire Marshall Walter Seely in an email dated January 6, 2023 expressed a few concerns including the need for a fire lane and a second means of egress stair from the second floor. The applicant revised the plans to accommodate the changes and in a follow up email dated February 3, 2023 the Fire Marshall noted that his concerns have been addressed and he had no objections to the proposal.

Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau

In a letter dated February 14, 2023, TTP provided detailed comments on the site and landscaping plans. The comments which were not already addressed as part of the February 15, 2023 revision set should be addressed prior a Building Permit.

Water Pollution Control Authority

In a letter dated January 23, 2023, Stamford WPCA provided technical comments to be addressed at the time of a Building Permit.

Environmental Protection Board

Lindsay Tomaszewski, Environmental Analyst, Environmental Protection Board in a letter dated February 9, 2023 provided comments including standard conditions to be satisfied prior to a Building Permit and Certificate of Occupancy.

Engineering Bureau

In a letter dated January 11, 2023 Susan Kisken provided several comments on the site and engineering plans. Revised plans were submitted by the Applicant dated February 15, 2023. Susan Kisken provided follow up comments in a letter dated February 21, 2023 noting the comments which were addressed and those that are still outstanding and need to be addressed prior to Building Permit.

Summary

Staff believes that the project will result in the redevelopment of an obsolete industrial property with a highly desirable use for Stamford. In addition to providing a new recreational venue, the redevelopment will significantly improve the drainage infrastructure on the site and improve the aesthetics of the area. The proposal is consistent with Master Plan Category #13 and specifically Policy 7H - Encourage Infill Development. The use is compatible with the neighborhood and will be well served by the site's access and parking. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the related Special Permit and Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses applications.