



City of Stamford
Zoning Board

STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY OF STAMFORD ZONING BOARD
FROM: VINEETA MATHUR, PRINCIPAL PLANNER
SUBJECT: **ZB #222-37, 222-37 MOD 128 Broad Street, Special Permit, Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses**
DATE: April 1, 2023

MASTER PLAN: Master Plan Category 11 (Downtown)

ZONING: C-G (General Commercial)

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

222-37	Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses	13 story residential building with 198 apartments and 4,324 sf of retail space.
222-04	Special Permits	Section 19.D – Large Scale General Development Appendix B, Footnote 4, Section 7.S – Residential Density Appendix B, Footnote 7 - Setbacks Appendix B, Footnote 13 – Premium FAR and Height Subsection 12.D.1(g) – Compact spaces Subsection 12.D.1(c) – Tandem and valet spaces

Introduction

The Applicants TR Broad II, LLC and 122-124 Broad Street, LLC (collectively “the Applicants”) are requesting approval of related applications including Special Permit, Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses Applications to facilitate the redevelopment of properties located at 0 Broad Street, 122-124 Broad Street, 128-134 Broad Street and 136 Broad Street to construct a

thirteen story (13) story building with a total of 198 dwelling units, 210 parking spaces (including tandem and valet) and approximately 4,324 sf of retail space.

Background

The site has been vacant for several decades and has been considered vital for completion of the Broad Street corridor. A portion of the site in the rear is leased by the City for parking in connection with the Bedford Street parking lot. The development parcel is bisected by Gay Street which is owned by the applicant and is incorporated in the proposed project.

Site and Surroundings

The site fronts on Broad Street and is adjacent to the Bedford Street city parking garage. To the west of the site are retail and restaurants. To the east of the site is a new eight (8) story, 228 unit residential building which is currently under construction. The Landmark Square office building is located directly across the site on Broad Street. The zoning district to the south of Broad Street is C-C and C-G to the west and east of the site.

Zoning Lot

The owner of 128-134 Broad and 136 Broad Street and 0 Broad Street is entering into a Zoning Lot Development Agreement with 122-124 Broad Street to utilize the development rights from 122-124 Broad Street allowing 27 additional dwelling units in the proposed project. The property 122-124 Broad Street is currently occupied by a one story building occupied by the restaurant Zaza and a dentist office. A draft of the Zoning Lot Development Agreement has been submitted by the Applicant.

Proposed Development

The Applicant proposes to construct a 13 story building with 198 residential units and ground floor retail use along Broad Street. A total of 173 striped parking spaces are proposed which count as a total of 210 parking spaces after accounting for valet and tandem spaces. The following approvals are needed to facilitate the development:

222-09 Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses & Special Permit

Access

The vehicular access to the building will be through Gay Street leading to a garage ramp on the east side of the building leading to the two above grade parking levels and a driveway on the west side of the building accessing the at grade parking spaces. The driveway on the west will

also provide delivery access to the restaurants along Bedford Street and Broad Street in the vicinity of the site.

Gay Street is also used to access the Bedford Street parking garage. The City of Stamford currently has an easement over Gay Street to allow this access. As shown on the Construction Staging and Management Plan, the access to the Bedford garage will be restricted from Broad Street during construction. The access will be maintained via Forest Street during construction and will be restored upon completion of the project. Staff recommends that a new easement allowing the City be recorded prior to the Certificate of Occupancy.

Gay Street will also have new sidewalks on both sides allowing it to become a pedestrian friendly Street. Staff recommends that the Applicant use highway grade decorative pavers along Gay Street to further enhance the pedestrian experience.

The main pedestrian access to the building will be from the lobby located along Broad Street at the corner of Gay Street extension. An additional pedestrian access is located on Broad Street on the west side of the building. The bike room has direct access to Gay Street. Four additional exits are provided on the rear of the building allowing access to the utility rooms and to provide internal access from the lobby to the at-grade parking area.

The proposed retail space will have four entrances/exits on Broad Street.

Unit Distribution

The proposed unit mix is as follows:

Studio – 22 units -11%

One-bedroom – 100 units - 50%

Two bedroom – 67 units – 34%

Three bedroom – 9 units – 5%

Parking

The Applicant proposes 173 striped parking spaces on site including 17 spaces at grade, 76 spaces on the second story and 80 spaces on the third story. The total parking requirement of 210 will be achieved using tandem spaces as well as valet with the valet being available at all hours starting from the building's occupancy.

Electric Vehicle spaces

The garage includes 10 electric vehicle (EV) spaces and 10 EV reserved spaces.

Bike spaces

The development has 27 Class A bike spaces within the ground floor bike room and 20 Class B bike spaces including 12 along Broad Street and 8 within the ground floor bike storage area.

Below Market Rate Housing

The development has a requirement to provide 17 Below Market Rate units at 50 % of Area Median Income. The Applicants have proposed to provide 17 units on site.

Building Design

The proposed building is well designed both in massing, street presence and use of high quality materials. The resulting building will greatly enhance the pedestrian experience on Broad Street and provide continuity to the vibrant Bedford Street retail corridor.

The proposed building presents a strong ground floor storefront design along Broad Street. The two upper garage levels are screened by the use of painted metal fins in wood like color. The upper stories with the residential use are designed with a glass window wall system complemented by vertical and horizontal metal bands and sections of fiber cement panels breaking the façade into smaller sections. The building façade is articulated in multiple ways including having two different façade planes on Broad Street on both side of Gay Street and adding both full and Juliette balconies. The building steps back on the south west corner at the third (terrace) level and has an amenity deck and pool at this level. The top of the building includes a strong roofline using a metal panel along with corrugated metal siding.

Special Permit

Large Scale General Development pursuant to Section 19.D

The proposed development will create 198 residential units and thus triggers the Large Scale Development threshold.

Residential Density pursuant to Appendix B, Footnote 4, Section 7.S

The Applicant requests a residential density of 400sf per lot area as specified in Appendix B, Footnote 4 and Section 7.S given the site is in Master Plan Category 11 and within C-G district. The proposal is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan to promote high density residential in the midst of Stamford Downtown to provide much needed housing as well as to support the retail/commercial uses.

Setbacks pursuant to Appendix B, Footnote 7

The Applicant is requesting a 0' side yard setback along the west side and 0' rear yard along the north side. The reduction of the side yard will allow a continuous street wall along Broad Street and facilitates and allow adequate building footprint for residential lobby, garage footprint and delivery access. The rear of the property abuts the Bedford Street parking lot and thus does not

necessitate setbacks. The residential stories of the building are adequately setback to fully meet the Light and Air requirement.

Premium FAR and Height pursuant to Appendix B, Footnote 13

The Applicant is requesting the Premium F.A.R. of 2.2 and Premium height of 150' given that the site is located on a Ground Floor Retail Street and provides ground floor retail use. This Special Permit also allows the exemption of the retail floor area from the maximum floor area calculations. The building must meet the following requirement to qualify for this premium: *All such buildings are required to provide Pedestrian Oriented Frontage, which is defined as uses of buildings and/or major design features that encourage pedestrian interaction at the street level. These include but are not limited to: retail shops, service businesses; establishments dealing directly with the general public; visually interesting features such as public art; display cases; awnings; signage at eye level; accessible plazas; or similar landscaped open spaces for public use and congregation. To the maximum extent practicable, all frontages on public and private streets and pedestrian ways shall be supported with contiguous pedestrian oriented amenities that appropriately fit into the context of the existing streetscape.*

The proposed building provides an inviting streetscape along with a widened pedestrian space on both sides of Gay Street. The Gay Street passage is proposed to be a generous 15 feet in height and well-lit further improving the pedestrian experience. The Broad Street façade will have a stone veneer band at the base, metal clad columns, glass storefronts and awnings and signage to activate the frontage.

Compact spaces pursuant to Subsection 12.D.1(g)

The Applicant proposes 11 compact spaces. These spaces are the required width of 8.5 feet but will be 16' in length compared to 18' required. The latest colored parking plan only shows 7 compact spaces. The Applicant should clarify the location of the remaining 4 compact spaces.

Tandem and valet spaces pursuant to Subsection 12.D.1(c)

The applicant is proposing a total of 28 tandem spaces with 7 tandem spaces (each with 2 parking spaces) each on Levels 2 and 3. A total of 89 valet spaces are proposed with 44 valet spaces and 45 valet spaces each on Levels 2 and 3.

The Applicant has submitted a parking management plan which demonstrates that the proposed parking layout adequately meets the demands of the residential parking given the proximity to the train station, bus service and provision of a shuttle service.

Referral Comments

Stamford Planning Board

The Stamford Planning Board, during its regularly scheduled meeting held on Tuesday January 10, 2023 recommended approval of the application 223-37 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 #11 (Downtown) and the following Master Plan Policies and Implementation Strategies.

- 3B.1 and 5A.1: Concentrate regional office, retail and entertainment uses and high-density residential development in the Downtown.
- 5A.6: Promote infill development on vacant sites within Downtown.
- 5B.1: Improve pedestrian connectivity within Downtown and between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
- 5B.2: Implement streetscape and traffic calming improvements Downtown.
- 6B: Preserve existing and create new affordable housing.
- 7B.1: Provide high-quality streetscape designs along principal streets.
- 7H: Encourage infill development.
- 7L.4: Vehicle charging stations.
- 7Q.5: Protect, manage and expand the urban forest, which is comprised of trees in the City right-of-way and in City parks, and street trees.

The Stamford Planning Board, during its regularly scheduled meeting held on Tuesday March 10, 2023 recommended approval of the application 223-37 (Amended) for Special Permit related to 12.D.1(g) related to provision of compact parking spaces and 12.D.1(c) related to tandem and valet spaces. The Planning Board recommended approval of the amended application with the condition there be a valet attendant onsite 24 hours per day/7 days a week once the facility is operational and this request is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #11 (Downtown).

City of Stamford Engineering Bureau

In a letter dated December 8, 2023, Susan Kiskan, Coordinator of Site Plan Reviews and Inspections at the Engineering Bureau provided comments on the submitted drawings and drainage analysis. The Applicant responded to these comments in a letter dated March 21, 2023 and updated Grading Plan and Storm Drainage and Utility Plan in response to these comments.

Fire Marshall

Fire Marshall Walter Seely in an email dated November 11, 2022 and a second email dated February 15, 2023 stated that he did not see any issues with the development or the amendment related to parking.

Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau

The Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau submitted comments dated March 7, 2023 including comments regarding site design, traffic signal replacement recommendations and transportation demand management and reporting requirements.

Summary

Staff believes that the proposed project will be a valuable addition to Stamford Downtown activating a long underutilized plot of land and connecting the Bedford and Broad commercial corridors. Staff recommends approval of the Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses and Special Permit applications along with the administrative approval of the Zoning Lot Development Agreement to facilitate the proposed mixed use project. The improvements to public amenities including improved Gay Street will enhance the character of the neighborhood and the provision of Below Market Rate housing will implement the goals of the City's Housing Affordability Plan. The development meets the overall goals of Master Plan 2015 as well as the specific goals related to Stamford Downtown.