



City of Stamford  
Zoning Board

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STAFF REPORT

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**TO:** CITY OF STAMFORD ZONING BOARD  
**FROM:** VINEETA MATHUR, PRINCIPAL PLANNER  
**SUBJECT:** ZB #223-44 Special Permit, Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses, Coastal Site Plan Review, 66 Stillwater Avenue  
**APPLICANT:** Pacific House Inc. and Mica Development CO LLC,  
**DATE:** February 2, 2024  
**MASTER PLAN:** Master Plan Category 6 (Commercial)  
**ZONING:** V-C (Village Commercial)

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**REQUESTED ACTIONS:**

223-44	Special Permit	Section 4.B.7.e.6(a) to permit a substantial new construction in the V-C district.
	Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Use	Section and 19.D - Site plan approval for the proposed building with 18 supportive housing units, supportive office, parking and associated site improvements.
	Authorization	Section 12.K.5 approval of the proposed sidewalk configuration
	Coastal Site Plan Review	Site is in the CAM boundary

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**INTRODUCTION**

Pacific House Inc. & MICA Development Co LLC (Collectively “Applicants”) are requesting approval of a Special Permit, Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses, Coastal Site Plan

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Review application and authorization to construct a modified sidewalk to facilitate an 18-unit supportive housing building at 66 Stillwater Avenue. The proposed use is permitted as of right in the existing V-C zoning district.

### **SITE & SURROUNDINGS**

The subject property is a total of 9,347 sf in size. It is located on the west side of Stillwater Avenue, approximately 150 ft. south of Boxer's square (intersection of Stillwater Avenue and Smith Street). The site is currently vacant and was previously occupied by a two-story single-family house with a garage. Stillwater Avenue is mostly residential with multifamily buildings including two story houses, three and four story apartment buildings and the twelve story Martin Luther King apartments. Three- and four-story to the north of the subject property is occupied by a commercial building with a travel agency and a computer service store. Located across from the subject site at 57 Stillwater Avenue is a 45-unit apartment building named 'The Stillwater' approved by the Zoning Board pursuant to application 220-01 and completed in 2021. The site is in close proximity to 41-45 Stillwater Avenue which is approved to be developed with 39 units of supportive housing.

### **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The proposed development at 66 Stillwater Avenue by Pacific House will be used to provide 18 units of deeply affordable supportive housing units in a three-story building. The Pacific House has been critical in serving homeless individuals and families by providing them with stable housing. The proposed project is one of several such small-scale developments that Pacific House has undertaken to address this critical issue including 597 Pacific Street, 36 & 38 Ann Street, 108 Richmond Hill Avenue. By combining housing with supportive services, the organization helps individuals re-establish themselves in society. All the units are proposed to be restricted to below 50% of AMI with actual tenants expected to be at 30% of AMI.

Each of the floors will have three one-bedroom units and three two-bedroom units. The proposed unit distribution is as follows:

One (1) bedroom units = 9 units

Average Floor area = 544 sf

Two (2) bedroom units = 9 units

Average Floor area = 768 sf

**Total proposed units = 18 units**



The ground floor of the building will have a lobby, an office for supportive services by Pacific House and stairs and elevator leading to the residential units above. A total of 6 bike parking spaces will be provided on the south side of the building. The remaining area underneath the second floor will have nine (9) parking spaces including a handicap parking space. The upper three stories will have six (6) units each for a total of eighteen (18) units.

While the application is in the Coastal Area Management boundary it does not impact any coastal resources.

### **Residential Density**

The Village Commercial district allows up to 1.5 residential FAR on a commercial street (Stillwater Avenue is a designated commercial street) with a 0.25 FAR bonus when all Below Market Rate (BMR) units are provided on site. Only the Base FAR of 1.5 is subject to the BMR requirement. The V-C district requires 6% of the base units to be at 50% AMI and 6% of the units to be at 65% AMI per table 7.4.1 of the Zoning Regulations. Given that all units are proposed to be restricted to families earning 50% AMI or less the site is eligible for the bonus floor area. The proposed FAR is 1.73 which is below the maximum permitted FAR.

Section 4.B.7.b.(7) as part of the V-C regulations requires an average floor area of units to be 500 sf for buildings providing more than 20% of the units as affordable. Based on 1.75 FAR the maximum permitted units is 32 ( $9,347 \times 1.75/500$ ). The proposed building with 18 units is far below the maximum permitted units.

### **Usable Open Space and landscaping**

The project is required to provide 75 sf of Usable Open Space per unit equivalent to 1,350 sf. A total of 1,355 sf of usable space is provided in the rear of the property. The open space will be lined by twenty-five (25) green giant Arborvitaes along the north and west property lines in the rear yard. Applicant is encouraged to explore a mix of other evergreen and deciduous trees to introduce variety. The south side of the open space will be lined with five (5) hydrangea bushes.

A planted area between the northern property line and the proposed building will include a row of five (5) Shadblow trees, one (1) American Holly tree and two (2) Album Elegans Rhododendron bushes. Smaller shrubs including evergreen Squirt Leucothoe and Hydrangea are also proposed amongst other small shrubs and ground cover.

### **Architectural Design**

Staff provided comments to the applicant regarding architectural design including creating a stronger roofline with a more elaborate cornice, adding faux window/alternative treatment of the

north elevation and refinement of storefront design. The applicant submitted revised plans on February 1, 2024 addressing these comments. Staff believes the proposed revisions are an improvement over the initial design. Staff will work with the applicant on further minor refinements/clarifications such as ensuring that cornice on the setback portion on both the left and right side is symmetrical. Further, clarification is needed on the material of the window trim on the front elevation.

**Section 12.5 - Sidewalk Design modification**

The applicant submitted a revised civil drawing set showing a 2.5ft wide brick paver amenity strip and a 4ft wide concrete sidewalk based on comments received from the Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau. This will allow the streetscape to be better aligned with the design of the streetscape fronting 57 Stillwater Avenue on the east side of the street. The brick amenity strip will accommodate a streetlight pole per the City standard. Two street trees (Dura Heat Birch) are proposed and will be provided on the west side of the concrete sidewalk.

**Zoning Data Chart  
66 Stillwater Ave**

**Special Permit and Site & Architectural Plan Application**

Standard	Required/Allowed			Proposed			Notes
	Comm. Street	Side Street	Total/ Blended	Comm. Street	Side Street	Total/ Blended	
Min. Lot Area	5,000			6,454	2,893	9,347	Complies.
Min. Frontage	50'			54'			Complies.
Max. Building Stories	5	4	n/a	4	4	n/a	Complies.
Max. Building Height	55'	45'	n/a	44'			Complies.
Max. Building Coverage	65%	55%	62%	5,200 (56%)			Complies.
Max. Lot Coverage	85%	80%	83%	7,100 (76%)			Complies.
Max. FAR	1.75	1.75	1.75	16,200 (1.73)			Complies.
Max. Dwelling Units	32			18			Complies.
Min. BMR	12%			100%			Complies.
Min. Usable Open Space	75sf / DU (1,350 sf)			75 sf / DU (1,355 sf)			Complies.
Min. Front Setback	Min 15' Max 20'	n/a	-	15'	n/a	-	Complies.
Min. Side Setback (north)	0' or 10'			0/10'			Complies.
Min. Side Setback (south)	0' or 10'			0/10'			Zero permitted within 70' of the Street Line
Min. Rear Setback	20'			20'			Complies.

**Parking Requirements**

Use Type	Requirement	Required	Proposed	Notes
Supportive Housing	18 DU	1 per 3 DU	6	Complies.
Supportive Services	200 sf	2 per 1,000 sf	0.4	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		-	<b>6.4</b>	<b>9</b>

**Bicycle Parking**

	Required	Provided	Notes
Class A (1 per 5 DU)	3.6	6	Complies.
Class B (1 per 10 DU)	1.8	TBD	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>6</b>	

## **PARKING**

The applicant proposes a total of **9 parking spaces** which exceeds the total required parking of **7 parking spaces** as shown below:

Supportive Housing requires 1 parking space per 3 units = 6 spaces.

Supportive Services (office) requires 2 spaces per 1000 sf = 0.4 spaces

Total required = 7 parking spaces.

## **Electric Vehicles**

No EV spaces are required for projects which generates a parking requirement of less than 10 parking spaces.

## **Bike Parking**

The applicant proposes 6 Class A spaces which meets the total bike requirement.

Class A ( 1 per 5 dwelling units) =  $18/5 = 3.6$  Class A bike parking

Class B ( 1 per 10 dwelling units) =  $18/10 = 1.8$  Class B bike parking

Prior to Building Permit the details of the secure bike parking spaces will be required to be provided.

## **Referral Comments**

### **Planning Board**

During their regularly scheduled meeting held on Tuesday, January 11, 2024, the Planning Board recommended approval of the proposed Special Permit request and found that the request is consistent with Master Plan Category 6 (Commercial – Neighborhood Business) The Planning Board letter noted that the project is aligned with the following Master Plan strategies and policies:

- Policy WS1.3: Support the efforts of the West Side Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) and other neighborhood associations working to improve the overall quality of life for the residents and workers of the West Side and Waterside neighborhoods.
- Policy 6C.2: Promote development of a variety of housing types.

## **Engineering Bureau**

Willetta Capelle, P.E. - Coordinator of Site Plan Reviews and Inspections in a letter dated January 22, 2024 made technical comments on the civil plans and the drainage summary which need to be addressed by the Applicant prior to the issuance of a Building Permit. The applicant provided a response to these comments in a letter dated February 1, 2024 along with revised civil plans dated February 1, 2024.

## **Transportation Traffic and Parking Bureau**

In a letter dated January 16, 2024 Transportation Traffic and Parking Bureau provided comments on the plans and sidewalk modification request. The applicant provided a response to these comments in a letter dated February 1, 2024 along with revised civil and architectural plans dated February 1, 2024.

## **Fire Marshall**

Assistant Fire Marshall Chad Armstrong in an email dated January 5, 2024, made several comments related to fire safety including location of fire hydrants, sprinkler systems and water connection. The Applicant responded to these comments on the same date agreeing to the conditions/comments proposed by the Assistant Fire Marshall. In an email dated January 8, 2024, Assistant Fire Marshall Chad Armstrong noted that the responses received were agreeable to the Fire Department.

## **Environmental Protection Board**

In a letter dated January 30, 2024, Pamela Fausty, Environmental Analyst stated that EPB has no objections to the proposed activity and provided conditions to be satisfied prior to the Building Permit and Certificate of Occupancy.

## **Department of Energy and Environmental Protection**

Karen Michaels submitted a Coastal Site Plan Review Checklist on December 21, 2023 which found the request to be compliant with the Connecticut Coastal Area Management policies.

## **Summary**

The proposed supportive housing will further the stated goals of the Stamford Housing Affordability Plan and the Mayor's Housing Executive Order which call for the increase in deeply affordable and supportive housing. The proposed development will improve the streetscape along

Stillwater Avenue and site infrastructure and thus be beneficial for the site and the neighborhood. Staff recommends approval of the related applications for Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses, Special Permit and Coastal Site Plan Review along with the modified sidewalk configuration.