

MAYOR
Caroline Simmons



**CITY OF STAMFORD
ZONING BOARD
LAND USE BUREAU**
888 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD
STAMFORD, CT 06904 -2152

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
Matthew Quiñones

Land Use Bureau Chief
Ralph Blessing

Principal Planner
Vineeta Mathur
(203) 977-4716
vmathur@stamfordct.gov

Associate Planner
Lindsey Cohen
(203) 977-4388
lcohen@stamfordct.gov

RECEIVED

June 18, 2024

JUN 18 2024

Ms. Theresa Dell, Chair, Planning Board
Land Use Bureau, City of Stamford
888 Washington Blvd.
Stamford, CT 06904

PLANNING BOARD

RE: Application 224-27- First National Joint Venture, LLC & Canal Street Fund, LLC, 18 Dock Street, Stamford, CT, - Special Permit, - This Special Permit pursuant to 7.4.C.1.g requests a modification to the method of BMR compliance by providing larger units at lower affordability levels.

Dear Ms. Dell:

In accordance with Section C6-40-10 of the Charter of the City of Stamford, the above captioned Application for a Special Permit is hereby referred to the Planning Board of the City of Stamford for its advisory report.

A public hearing has not yet been scheduled. Referral comments should be filed with the Zoning Board Office by **July 23, 2024**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (203) 977-4716.

Sincerely,

Vineeta Mathur
Principal Planner

June 14, 2024

VIA E-MAIL & HAND DELIVERY

Lindsey Cohen, Associate Planner
Land Use Bureau
City of Stamford
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, CT 06901
LCohen@StamfordCT.gov

Re: Special Permit Application
Address: 18 Dock Street
Applicants: First National Joint Venture, LLC and Canal Street Fund, LLC
(collectively, the “Applicants”)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

June of 2022, the Zoning Board approved the redevelopment of the Property with a mixed-use building consisting of approximately 7,000± SF of ground floor retail space and 395 apartments above as well as related parking, site and landscaping improvements (the **“Approved Project”**).

As you know, the Approved Project is under construction and is anticipated to be complete in 2024. Based on several discussions with you and Mr. Blessing, the Applicants have decided to modify the standard method of BMR compliance by providing larger units at lower affordability levels. In order to effectuate the change, the Applicants are submitting a Special Permit Application pursuant to Sections 7.4.C.1.g & k of the Stamford Zoning Regulations.

Enclosed please find the following materials in support of this application:

- Eight (8) copies of the following application and supporting materials:
 - Application for Special Permit including
 - Schedule A – Property Description
 - Schedule B – List of Plans
 - Schedule C – Statement of Findings; and
- Eight (8) reduced-size plans prepared by HLW (27 sheets total).

We look forward to advice as to when the Planning Board will consider this proposal. At that time, I kindly ask that members of our project team and I be allowed to make a brief

presentation regarding this application. As always, thank you for your time and attention regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Lisa Feinberg

Lisa L. Feinberg

Enclosures

cc: Ralph Blessing
Development Team

June 14, 2024

VIA E-MAIL & HAND DELIVERY

Ms. Vineeta Mathur
Principal Planner
City of Stamford
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, CT 06901

Re: Special Permit Application
Address: 18 Dock Street
Applicants: First National Joint Venture, LLC and Canal Street Fund, LLC
(collectively, the “Applicants”)

Dear Ms. Mathur:

Our firm represents the Applicants, the owner and developer of 18 Dock Street (the “**Property**”). In June of 2022, the Zoning Board approved the redevelopment of the Property with a mixed-use building consisting of approximately 7,000± SF of ground floor retail space and 395 apartments above as well as related parking, site and landscaping improvements (the “**Approved Project**”).

As you know, the Approved Project is under construction and is anticipated to be complete in 2024. Based on several discussions with you and Mr. Blessing, the Applicants have decided to modify the standard method of BMR compliance by providing larger units at lower affordability levels. In order to effectuate the change, the Applicants are submitting a Special Permit Application pursuant to Sections 7.4.C.1.g & k of the Stamford Zoning Regulations.

Enclosed please find the following materials in support of this application:

- Letters of authority executed by the Applicants
- One (1) check representing the following application fees:
 - Special Permit application fee
 - Public Hearing fee
- Twenty-two (22) copies of the following application and supporting materials:
 - Application for Special Permit including
 - Schedule A – Property Description

- Schedule B – List of Plans
 - Schedule C – Statement of Findings; and
- Twenty-two (22) reduced-size plans prepared by HLW (27 sheets total).

Please let me know if you have any questions or require additional materials. We look forward to presenting our Application to the Zoning Board. Thank you for your time and attention regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Lisa Feinberg

Lisa L. Feinberg

Enclosures

cc: Ralph Blessing
Development Team



APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL PERMIT

Complete, notarize, and forward **thirteen (13) hard copies and (1) electronic copy in PDF format** to Clerk of the Zoning Board with a **\$1,000.00 Public Hearing Fee** and the required application filing fee (**see Fee Schedule below**), payable to the City of Stamford.

NOTE: Cost of required advertisements are payable by the Applicant and performance of required mailing to surrounding property owners is the sole responsibility of the applicant. **LAND RECORDS RECORDING FEE:** \$60.00 for First page - \$5.00 for each additional page)

Fee Schedule

Special Permit 20,000 sq. ft. or less	\$460.00
Special Permit more than 20,000 sq. ft.	\$460.00 + \$30 per 1,000 sq. ft. or portion thereof in excess of 20,000 sq. ft.

APPLICANT NAME (S): First National Joint Venture, LLC (property owner, ground lessor) & Canal Street Fund, LLC (building owner, ground lessee)

APPLICANT ADDRESS: c/o Agent: Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey LLC, 1055 Washington Blvd., Stamford, CT 06901

APPLICANT PHONE #: c/o Agent: 203-425-4200

IS APPLICANT AN OWNER OF PROPERTY IN THE CITY OF STAMFORD? Yes

LOCATION OF PROPERTY IN STAMFORD OWNED BY APPLICANT (S): See attached Schedule A

ADDRESS OF SUBJECT PROPERTY: 18 Dock Street

PRESENT ZONING DISTRICT: R-HD

TITLE OF SITE PLANS & ARCHITECTURAL PLANS: See attached Schedule B

REQUESTED SPECIAL PERMIT: (Attach written statement describing request)

See attached Schedule C

LOCATION: (Give boundaries of land affected, distance from nearest intersecting streets, lot depths and Town Clerk's Block Number)

Frontage on Dock Street, John Street & Canal Street. Block 82. See attached Schedule A for Property Description.

NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNERS OF ALL PROPERTY INVOLVED IN REQUEST:

<u>NAME & ADDRESS</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
First National Joint Venture, LLC	18 Dock Street
c/o Heyman Properties, LLC	Stamford, CT
667 Madison Avenue, Floor 20	06902
New York, NY 10065	

DOES ANY PORTION OF THE PREMISES AFFECTED BY THIS APPLICATION LIE WITHIN 500 FEET OF THE BORDER LINE WITH GREENWICH, DARIEN OR NEW CANAAN? NO (If yes, notification must be sent to Town Clerk of neighboring community by registered mail within 7 days of receipt of application – PA 87-307).

DOES THE PROJECT RESULT IN THE CREATION OF 10 OR MORE UNITS OR 10,000 SF OR MORE IN FLOOR AREA OR DISTURBANCE OF 20,000 SF OR MORE IN LAND AREA, THROUGH NEW DEVELOPMENT, RECONSTRUCTION, ENLARGEMENT OR SUBSTANTIAL ALTERATIONS? NO (If yes, then complete the Stamford Sustainability Scorecard per Section 15.F).



DATED AT STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT, THIS 19th DAY OF June, 2024

SIGNED: Lisa L. Feinberg
Lisa L. Feinberg

NOTE: Application cannot be scheduled for Public Hearing until 35 days have elapsed from the date of referral to the Stamford Planning Board. If applicant wishes to withdraw application, please notify the Zoning Board at least three (3) days prior to Public Hearing so that the Board may have sufficient time to publicize the withdrawal.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
ss STAMFORD June 19, 2024
COUNTY OF FAIRFIELD

Personally appeared Lisa L. Feinberg, signer of the foregoing application, who made oath to the truth of the contents thereof, before me.

Jason Klein
Notary Public Commissioner of the Superior Court

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

APPL. #: _____ Received in the office of the Zoning Board: Date: _____

By: _____

Revised 09/02/2020

SCHEDULE A

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

18 Dock Street
Stamford, Connecticut

BEGINNING at a point on the easterly side of John Street at its intersection with the northerly side of land now or formerly of 523 CANAL OWNER LLC (#523 Canal Street); thence, running along said easterly side of John Street N 16°42'10" W a distance of 281.00 feet; and along a non-tangent clockwise curve the central angle of which is 16°54'36" with a radius of 35.43 feet and an arc length of 10.46 feet having a chord of N 15°24'34" E a distance of 10.42 feet to the Southerly side of Dock Street; thence, running along said southerly side of Dock Street, N 53°57'16" E a distance of 78.96 feet, along a clockwise curve the central angle of which is 8°48'08" with a radius of 483.23 feet and an arc length of 74.24 feet having a chord of N 58°21'21" E a distance of 74.16 feet, and N 73°05'30" E a distance of 147.72 feet to the Westerly side of Canal Street; thence running in a southerly direction along said westerly side of Canal Street; S 16°54'10" E a distance of 334.07 feet to the aforesaid land now or formerly of 523 CANAL OWNER LLC; thence running westerly along said land now or formerly of 523 CANAL OWNER LLC, S 73°00'00" W a distance of 300.58 feet to the point of beginning.

SCHEDULE B

List of Plans

- Unit Type: A – One Bedroom, one Bath with private Terrace Unit(s): E102
- Unit Type A_v2 – One Bedroom, One Bath with *Private Terrace (*1st Floor) Unit(s): E116, E216, W209;
- Unit Type A_v5 – One Bedroom, One Bath with Private Terrace Unit(s): E115
- Unit Type A_v5 – One Bedroom, One Bath with Balcony Unit(s): W807
- Unit Type A_V4 – One Bedroom, One Bath Unit(s) E202;
- Unit Type: X – One Bedroom, One Bath Unit(s) E201;
- Unit Type: Y – One Bedroom, One Bath, Unit(s): E206;
- Unit Type: C – One Bedroom, One Bath, On Den, Unit(s) E203;
- Unit Type: D – One Bedroom, One Bath – Unit(s): E204;
- Unit Type: HH – Two Bedroom, Two Bath, Unit(s): E103;
- Unit Type: II – Two Bedroom, Two Bath, Unit(s) W212
- Unit Type: BB – Two Bedroom, Two Bath, Unit(s) W310;
- Unit Type: EE – Two Bedroom, Two Bath, One Den, Unit(s) E314;
- Unit Type: GG – Two Bedroom, 2 Bath, One Den with Window, Unit(s): W206, W306, W406;
- Unit Type: GG_v2 – Two Bedroom, 2 Bath, One Den with Window, Unit(s): E207, E307, E407;
- Unit Type: BBB – Three Bedroom, Two Bath, Unit(s): W211;
- Level 1 – Floor Plan, A-101, revised to November 10, 2023;
- Level 2 – Floor Plan, A-102, revised to November 10, 2023;
- Level 3 to 4 – Floor Plan, A-103, revised to November 10, 2023;
- Level 5 – Floor Plan, A-104, revised to November 10, 2023;
- Level 6 – Floor Plan, A-105, revised to November 10, 2023;
- Level 7 – Floor Plan, A-106, revised to November 10, 2023;
- Level 8 to 10 – Floor Plan, A-107, revised to November 10, 2023;
- Levels 11 to 16, Floor Plan – A-108, revised to November 10, 2023;
- Level 17 – Floor Plan, A-109, revised to November 10, 2023;
- Level 18 – Floor Plan, A-110, revised to November 10, 2023; and
- Level 19 & 20 Bulkhead Plan, A-111, revised to November 10, 2023.

SCHEDULE C

Statement of Findings – REVISED June 18, 2024

1. Introduction

First National Joint Venture, LLC (“**FNJV**”) is the property owner/ground lessor and Canal Street Fund LLC is the building owner/ground lessee (collectively, the “**Applicants**”) of certain property known as 18 Dock Street, located at the intersection of John Street, Dock Street and Canal Street (collectively, the “**Property**”). Today, the Property is in Master Plan Category 9 (Urban Mixed-Use) and the R-HD (Residential – High Density Multifamily District).

The Property sits at the gateway to the South End, just south of I-95. FNJV purchased the Property in the late 1990’s, and it was historically occupied by retail and office buildings. In June of 2022, the Zoning Board approved the redevelopment of the Property with a mixed-use building consisting of approximately 7,000± SF of ground floor retail space and 395 apartments above as well as related parking, site and landscaping improvements (the “**Approved Project**”). Construction of the Approved Project is well-underway.

During the application review process, the Applicants were transparent about their interest in exploring a different solution to the traditional Below Market Rate (BMR) housing obligation, which requires developments with more than ten (10) units to designate ten percent (10%) of the units as affordable to families earning less than fifty percent (50%) of the Area Median Income (AMI).¹ In the last fifteen (15) years, hundreds of BMR units have been constructed in the South End at the fifty percent (50%) of AMI level. While this is an achievement the City of Stamford should be proud of, there is still plenty of work to be done when it comes to housing affordability. To that end, the Applicants have remained committed to exploring different options which may better address the current need, including the contribution of a fee-in-lieu payment, offsite construction or providing the BMR units onsite at an alternative AMI level. Ultimately, the Applicants determined that providing the units onsite at alternative affordability levels and unit sizes would be best.

2. Background

Housing affordability remains a significant challenge for many residents across Connecticut. The demand for housing at all price points exceeds available supply in most (if not all) municipalities across the State, including the City of Stamford. According to the Stamford Master Plan (the “**Master Plan**”) “almost half of Stamford’s residents (46.2%) spend more than thirty percent (30%) of their household income on housing costs, including mortgage or rent payments and utility bills” and, as such, are “housing cost burdened.”²

The need for better housing solutions has only become more pronounced in the decade following the adoption of the Master Plan. In 2022, the Stamford Housing Affordability Plan (the “**Affordability Plan**”)

¹ Pursuant to Section 7.4.1, Footnote 1, the percentage of units designated as BMR units excludes those units developed with Premium Floor Area.

² Master Plan, pg. 129.

stated that over 12,000 renter households in Stamford were cost burdened.³ The Affordability Plan also recognized that, while “the BMR program has been successful at delivering affordable rental housing units for households earning under \$50,000,”⁴ the number of bedrooms and affordability levels provided with the required onsite BMR designation may not be responsive to those who are most in need.⁵

3. Proposal

The Approved Project consists of roughly 7,000± SF of ground floor retail space, 395 apartments, amenity space, 427 structured parking spaces and associated landscaping and site improvements. The unit mix includes studio (29), one-bedroom (255), two-bedroom (76), three-bedroom (30) and duplex (5) apartments. Residential units, on average, range in size from 512± square feet for studios, 733± square feet for one-bedroom units, 1,063± square feet for two-bedroom units, 1,246± square feet for three-bedroom units and 1,388± square feet for duplex units.

In conformance with Section 7.4 of the Stamford Zoning Regulations, ten percent (10%) of the units constructed, excluding those units permitted pursuant to Premium Floor Area, must be provided as BMR units. Thus, the Approved Project was required to provide thirty-two (32) BMR units onsite at fifty percent (50%) of AMI.⁶ In lieu of this, and pursuant to the equivalency calculation found in Section 7.4.C.1.g and k of the Zoning Regulations, the Applicants now propose a total of twenty (20) units at 40-50% of AMI.

The table below provides a direct comparison between the proposals:

Approved Project			Proposed Project		
Unit Size	Affordability Level		Unit Size	Affordability Level	
Studio	40%	0	Studio	40%	0
	45%	0		45%	1
	50%	2		50%	0
One-bedroom	40%	0	One-bedroom	40%	6
	45%	0		45%	0
	50%	21		50%	0
Two-bedroom	40%	0	Two-bedroom	40%	10
	45%	0		45%	1
	50%	6		50%	1
Three-bedroom	40%	0	Three-bedroom	40%	1
	45%	0		45%	0
	50%	3		50%	0
TOTAL AT 50% OF AMI		32	TOTAL AT 40-45% OF AMI		20

With the Applicants proposal, the number of larger units is increased, and the AMI threshold is reduced thereby addressing two of the City’s continued housing goals.

³ Stamford Housing Affordability Plan, pg. 13.

⁴ Affordability Plan, pg. 87.

⁵ See Affordability Plan, pg. 88.

⁶ Pursuant to Section 7.4.C.1.j, the fractional (0.8) requirement may be provided by a fee-in-lieu payment.

Moreover, the proposed BMR equivalency is in compliance with Section 19-3.2 (Special Permit Standards) of the Zoning Regulations as follows:

Special Permits shall be granted by the reviewing board only upon a finding that the proposed use or structure or the proposed extension or alteration of an existing use or structure is in accord with the public convenience and welfare after taking into account, where appropriate:

- 1) *The location and nature of the proposed site including its size and configuration, the proposed size, scale and arrangement of structures, drives and parking areas and the proximity of existing dwellings and other structures.*

No changes to the approved development or site plan are proposed in connection with this Special Permit request. However, the Property's location, just blocks away from the Stamford Transportation Center and numerous retail establishments, make it an ideal location for affordable housing. By lowering the AMI and exchanging studio and one-bedroom units for two-bedroom units, the Applicants will be providing the convenience of living in a transit-oriented development to more people in the city. Thus, the Applicants submit that the proposal is in accord with the public convenience and welfare.

- 2) *The nature and intensity of the proposed use in relation to its site and the surrounding area. Operations in connection with special permit uses shall not be injurious to the neighborhood, shall be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of these Regulations, and shall not be more objectionable to nearby properties by reason of noise, fumes, vibration, artificial lighting or other potential disturbances to the health, safety or peaceful enjoyment of property than the public necessity demands.*

The requested Special Permit will not alter the approved redevelopment or use of the site. Moreover, providing larger units at more affordable rents onsite will help provide safe, convenient and desperately needed homes for more of the existing and future Stamford population. Therefore, this proposal will not be injurious to the neighborhood.

- 3) *The resulting traffic patterns, the adequacy of existing streets to accommodate the traffic associated with the proposed use, the adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading, and the extent to which proposed driveways may cause a safety hazard, or traffic nuisance.*

No changes are proposed that would impact traffic patterns. All required parking can continue to be accommodated onsite.

- 4) *The nature of the surrounding area and the extent to which the proposed use or feature might impair its present and future development.*

The residential use of the Property will not change. As noted in the Master Plan, a substantial amount of Stamford residents are housing cost burdened. Providing safe, affordable housing will result in more stable living conditions for countless Stamford residents. This will enhance, rather than impair, the present and future development of the community.

- 5) *The Master Plan of the City of Stamford and all statements of the purpose and intent of these regulations.*

The Master Plan recognizes that “addressing housing affordability has remained a top priority for the city.”⁷ The proposed equivalency will forward several aspects of the Master Plan including:

- Policy 6B - Preserve existing and create new affordable housing.⁸
 - Implementation Strategy 6B.5 – Promote Inclusionary Zoning Incentives
- Policy 6C – Encourage development of mixed-income housing.⁹
 - Implementation Strategy 6C.2 – Promote development of a variety of housing types

Similarly, Section 7.4 (Below Market Rate Housing Program) of the Zoning Regulations states that the City of Stamford’s public purpose and policy to “achieve a diverse and balanced community with housing available and affordable for households of all income levels.” The Applicants submit that the current proposal also fulfills this goal.

⁷ Master Plan, pg. 119.

⁸ Master Plan, pg. 134.

⁹ Master Plan, pg. 135.