



## Memorandum

DATE: January 5, 2023

TO: Members of the Plainfield Planning Board

FROM: Malvika Apte, PP, AICP *MA*  
Consulting Board Planner

CC: Maximo Vazquez, Planning Board Secretary  
Peter Vignuolo, Esq., Board Attorney  
Drew M. Di Sessa, PE, PP, CME, Board Engineer  
Zenobia L. Fields, Director, Plainfield Department of Economic Development  
Brittany Claybrooks, Director, Plainfield Division of Planning  
N'Dela Costley, Plainfield Zoning Officer  
Joseph A. Paparo, Esq.- Applicant's Attorney  
Joseph Alesso, Applicant's Representative  
A.M. Ragab, AIA, Applicant's Architect

**RE: *Planning Review # 1***  
***Application PB 2022-36 (Amendment to PB 2021-33)***  
***112-116 East Front Street***  
***Block 316, Lot 4***  
***Zone: TODD / CBD Transit Oriented Development Downtown / Central***  
***Business District***

FILE NO.: HPFP0316.01

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We are in receipt of the following items related to the above mentioned application:

- Transmittal letter prepared by Joseph A. Paparo, Esq., dated November 16, 2022;
- Application form received by the City on November 16, 2022;
- Application Rider with the following:
  - Easement/Deed Restriction Disclosure;
  - Variance/Waivers;
  - Statement of Principal Points;
- Corporation Disclosure Statement for Paramount Properties 112 Front, LLC;
- Political Contribution Disclosure Statements for Applicant, Applicant's architect, and Applicant's attorney;



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- Copy of check dated November 10, 2022 submitted to City of Plainfield in the amount of \$2,500.00;
- Two (2) sheets of architectural elevations entitled “Proposed Change of Use to Building 112 East Front Street Plainfield, NJ”, prepared by AMRACH Design Studio dated December 28, 2021 and last revised September 22, 2022.

We offer the following comments for Board’s consideration:

### 1. Proposed Application

The Applicant has filed this application seeking amended preliminary and final site plan approval. The subject property is Block 316 Lot 4 in the City of Plainfield tax maps, with street address 112-116 East Front Street. The project site includes an existing three-story masonry building with a 3,423 square foot footprint. The building has two commercial retail uses on the ground floor and vacant commercial spaces in the upper levels. Per Resolution memorialized November 4, 2021 for PB 2021-33, the Applicant received approval to maintain the existing commercial uses on the ground floor and to renovate the second and third floors from commercial use to eight (8) one-bedroom residential apartments on the subject property. Final Resolution compliance was granted by the Planning Division on January 28, 2022. According to application documents submitted by the Applicant, construction commenced and during construction the integrity of the existing third floor ceiling and roof joists was determined to be inadequate, necessitating repairs. The Applicant then began to identify ways to redesign the roof and façade to prevent further issues.

With this application, Applicant is seeking amended site plan approval for revisions to the front façade and roof of the building. The roof is proposed to be revised from a mansard type roof to a flat roof with a parapet and cornice. The front façade is proposed to be modified to provide new gables and additional windows. No changes are proposed to the interior renovations of the building that were previously approved by the Planning Board in PB 2021-33. ***Applicant shall be prepared to demonstrate during the Board hearing that no changes are proposed to the approved interior renovations.***

### 2. Completeness

The application for Amendment was filed with the Planning Division on November 16, 2022 and was deemed complete on December 12, 2022. Per §17:8-2, the following items were noted as missing or incomplete:

- a. **§17:8-2.B.5:** A tax search indicating current status of all taxes, assessments, and fees due to the City of Plainfield. ***An official tax record generated by the Plainfield Tax Department shall be submitted.***



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- b. **§17:8-2.B.6:** All requisite escrow deposits and fees. ***Please see below. A copy of a check submitted to the City was included in the application. We defer to the Board Secretary to ensure compliance with this item.***
- c. **§17:8-2.B.9 a-s:** ***Given the nature of this amendment, these are taken as waiver requests. We take no issue to the Board granting these waivers.***
- d. **§17:8-2.F.2-19:** ***Given the nature of this amendment, these are taken as waiver requests. We take no issue to the Board granting these waivers.***

Pursuant to §17:8-3, when requested in writing by the applicant, the Board shall have the authority to grant waivers from the submission requirements. These waivers can be granted if the Board finds such request is reasonable and that an informed decision can be made. If the Board denies the request for submission waivers, the application shall be deemed incomplete.

### **3. Subject Site and Surrounding Land Uses**

The subject site, comprising of Block 316 Lot 4, is located in downtown Plainfield and is therefore surrounded by mostly commercial uses. A City-owned public parking lot is located east of the subject property. It appears that the neighboring property to the northeast (Lot 5) is also owned by the City and provides a pedestrian path from East Front Street to the parking lot. The parcel is an interior lot along the east side of East Front Street, with the nearest cross street being Park Avenue to the southwest. The site is located about a quarter-mile from the south-bound tracks of the Plainfield Train Station to the east, which is serviced by the Raritan Valley Line of New Jersey Transit. The north-bound station is slightly further to the east.

The project site includes an existing building on the property with a footprint of 3,423 square feet. The building reaches three stories in height and was built in 1865 according to property records. It presently has commercial retail uses on the ground floor and vacant commercial spaces in the upper levels. Landscaping and parking on the lot is nonexistent.

The Planning Board memorialized a resolution on November 4, 2021 granting preliminary and final site plan approval to application PB 2021-33, under which the Applicant proposed to maintain the existing commercial uses on the ground floor and renovate the second and third floors from commercial use to eight (8) one-bedroom residential apartments on the subject property. The Applicant was granted final Resolution compliance from the Planning Division on January 28, 2022.

Review of NJ-GeoWeb Application shows no significant environmental constraints identified on the site. Review of the National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) indicates the site is located in Zone X: Area of Minimal Flood Hazard.



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**4. Zoning and Bulk Review**

- a. *Use:* The subject property (Block 316, Lots 4) is located within the TODD/CBD Transit-Oriented Development Downtown / Central Business District zone, in which mixed use structures are a permitted use, provided that a permitted commercial/office use is proposed on the ground floor and any residential uses are proposed on the upper levels. The proposed use, with retail on the ground floor and residential apartments on the upper levels, is therefore permitted. The Planning Board granted approval for this mix of uses per Resolution for PB 2021-33. ***The proposed amendment presented with this application will not change these approved uses. Applicant shall confirm this during the Board hearing.***
  
- b. *Bulk Regulations:* The following table shows the compliance of the development with bulk regulations of the TODD/CBD Zone. ***No changes are proposed to the bulk conditions. The eight existing non-conformities were confirmed by the Planning Board per the Resolution for PB 2021-33, memorialized November 4, 2022.***

<b>Bulk Regulations: TODD / CBD Transit-Oriented Development Downtown / Central Business District Zone</b>			
	<b>Required</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Minimum Lot Area (square feet)	5,000	3,876	<b>3,876 (P)</b>
Maximum Density (du/acre)	100	0	89.9
Minimum Lot Width (feet)	50	41.05	<b>41.05 (P)</b>
Minimum Lot Frontage (feet)	50	41.05	<b>41.05 (P)</b>
Minimum Lot Depth (feet)	100	+/-94	<b>+/-94 (P)</b>
Minimum Front Yard Setback (feet)	0	4.3	4.3
Minimum Rear Yard Setback (feet)	10	2.7	<b>2.7 (P)</b>
Minimum Side Yard Setback (feet) One / Combined	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0
Maximum Floor Area Ratio	4.5	3.1	3.1
Maximum Percent Building Cover	75%	<b>88.3%</b>	<b>88.3% (P)</b>
Maximum Percent Total Lot Cover	90%	<b>100%</b>	<b>100% (P)</b>
Minimum Number of Stories	4	<b>3</b>	<b>3 (P)</b>
Maximum Number of Stories	6	3	3
Maximum Building Height (feet)	65	61	61
Minimum Improvable Area (sq. ft.)	2,700	3,449	3,449
MIA – Diameter of Circle (feet)	36	41.05	41.05
<b>(V) Variance                      (P) Previously Confirmed Existing Non-Conformity</b>			



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## **5. Façade Changes**

The roof is proposed to be revised from a mansard type roof to a flat roof with a parapet and cornice. The front façade is proposed to be modified to provide new gables and additional windows. No changes are proposed to the interior renovations of the building that were previously approved by the Planning Board in PB 2021-33.

The rear elevation includes a note stating “Existing vinyl siding to be replaced as necessary.” However, this is not visualized in the amended plans. The plans that previously received final compliance included a visualization of the vinyl siding. Applicant shall confirm that the vinyl siding on the rear façade will be provided. Additionally, the amended plans do not show windows on the left side elevation, which were indicated on the plans that previously received final compliance. Applicant shall clarify if windows are proposed or if they are now being removed from the proposal.

## **6. Redevelopment Plan**

February 2020 City of Plainfield adopted TODD South Redevelopment Plan for this site. The primary objective of this plan is to enhance existing mixed use corridor along Park Avenue and Watchung Avenue. The Plan states typical development shall incorporate ground floor retail or commercial use with upper floor dedicated to residential use. The Board previously approved the use of the building for commercial and residential purposes. The Applicant does not propose any changes to these uses with this amendment.

## **7. Planning Comments**

1. We defer to Board Engineer regarding drainage, stormwater, utilities, traffic impact, and other engineering issues related to the site.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any planning related questions at [mapte@cmeusa1.com](mailto:mapte@cmeusa1.com).

MA:nf