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August 10, 2020

Chairman Michael Giancarlo
and Members of the Planning Board
Borough of Hillsdale
380 Hillsdale Avenue
Hillsdale, NJ 07642

Regarding: **Block 1407, Lots 14, Borough of Hillsdale: Application #03-20
40 Central Ave.
BCUW Madeline Housing Partners LLC: Applicant & Owner**

Dear Chairman Giancarlo and Members of the Board:

We are in receipt of an application for a Site Plan with variances for the above property that was submitted to the Borough on or about June 30, 2020. The applicant also submitted engineering plans, architectural drawings, an architectural rendering and photographs of the subject and area properties.

The engineering plans are prepared by Schwanewede Hals Engineering and consist of the following four sheets dated May 18, 2020:

- Sheet 1 of 4 entitled, "Site Plan."
- Sheet 2 of 4 entitled, "Grading, Landscaping & Lighting Plan."
- Sheet 3 of 4 entitled, "Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan."
- Sheet 4 of 4 entitled, "Survey/Soil Movement."

The architectural plans are prepared by Virgona & Virgona and consist of two sheets (A1 & A2) dated March 6, 2020.

Also submitted is a rendering of the proposed building, and photos of the subject and adjacent properties.

The application is for Site Plan approval with Use (d1) and bulk variances. The proposed multi-family use is not permitted in the zone district. The Mayor and Council Representative must recuse themselves from the application deliberations due to the Use variance being sought.

General Site Description

Lot 4 consists of 26,400 SF (0.60 acre) and is located on the east side of Central Ave., south of the Cross Street intersection, in the R-4 Residential Zone (minimum lot size 7,500 SF). The lot is presently improved with a two-story frame dwelling. An asphalt driveway provides access to the property from Central Ave. A detached frame garage is situated behind the driveway.

The lot meets all required zoning regulations and is oversized in lot area for the zone district. It is rectangular in shape. The rear property line abuts the George White middle school property/recreation area.

The Application

The applicant proposes to remove the improvements on the property and construct a two-story residential building. The building will contain a four-bedroom group home on the first floor and two, one-bedroom affordable units on the second level. A patio is proposed behind the building.

A nine-space parking area also is proposed. One of the parking spots will be barrier free.

The building will house three residential uses, which is not permitted in the R-4 zone district. Therefore, a use variance is required. In addition, the building and associated improvements do not conform to all of the bulk regulations associated with the R-4 Zone district and bulk variances are required (although the zone requirements did not anticipate the proposed use).

Completeness Review

The application is considered a Major Site Plan and was reviewed against the requirements contained in Land Use Section 310-88, 89, 91 & 92 for Major Site Plan approval, as well as the completeness requirements for variance applications. The following items are deficient:

Major Site Plan

1. 310-88C – Departmental referrals and proof by affidavit that the referrals were made 30 days prior to the Public Hearing.

2. 310-89A16 – Drainage within 500 ft. and stormwater management computations, soil test pits.
3. 310-89B(1) – The applicant should clarify whether there will be any employees associated with the group home.
4. 310-89B(5) – The applicant should clarify whether any signage is proposed.
5. 310-89C(2) – Solid waste storage area with screening method.
6. 310-91F (1): Developer’s Agreement (to be incorporated with a resolution).
7. 310-91F (2): Performance guaranty only for dedicated improvements and site safety (to be incorporated with a resolution).
8. 310-91F (3): Maintenance guaranty for dedicated and on-site drainage improvements (to be incorporated with a resolution).

The application can be deemed complete and scheduled for a public hearing if the Board waives the above submission requirements.

Zoning Review

The engineering plans include a bulk table. It appears that the following variances are required.

Proposed

1. **Impervious Coverage:** 37% proposed vs. 30% maximum permitted, a difference of 7%.
2. **Combined Side Yard Setback:** 25.8 ft. proposed s. 30 ft. minimum required, a difference of 4.3 ft.
3. **Sec. 310-48 - Use Variance:** The proposed multi-family use is not permitted in the zone district.

General Comments

We offer general comments on the plans as follows:

1. The layout of the building creates a parking lot in the front yard space which is out of character in this residential area. If the building could be re-oriented 90 degrees, it may be possible to place all parking in the rear yard space.

A recent, similar-sized group home on Cedar Lane in River Vale with the same parking capacity was configured to permit parking in the rear yard, with a dumpster, using an 18 ft. two-way wide driveway. It has the same lot frontage width.

The proposed project should be compared to the new United Way group home at 370 Clinton Avenue in Wyckoff, which houses the same number of units, but has a much smaller parking area and one driveway (see below).



United Way - Wyckoff Group Home

Alternatively, the building can be shifted rearward to increase the front yard space, and increase the distance to the parking lot using the above configuration.

2. Impervious coverage can be reduced by using paving stones for all outside concrete sidewalk areas.
3. Computations for stormwater management are required based on soil test pits witnessed by our office are required.
4. Refuse collection for the several units is a concern because there are no garages. Since Hillsdale has only once a week refuse pickup, an on-site dumpster for waste and recycled products is needed, particularly in the summer months. Its location should not result in an odor or unsightly nuisance to adjacent residential properties.

5. Less commercial-type site lighting should be used. Low, lighted bollards, residential fixtures, etc. should be considered since this project immediately abuts residential dwellings. Furthermore LED lighting, if used, must be kept to no more than 3,500K temperature to avoid being garish.
6. It appears that 13 trees are being removed. Under the Borough land use ordinance, 26 trees are required for restitution. Five trees are proposed.

An evergreen or boxwood buffer should be placed to shield the parking area from view. By removing the northerly sidewalk, reconfiguring the parking lot like the Wyckoff Group Home, more offset space is provide for planting.

The overall landscaping plan should be more robust.

7. The southerly exit driveway apron abuts the existing the apron to the adjacent residential property and will result in a 30 ft. wide apron.

This is because the parking area is only offset 2 ft. from the southerly property line (shown in red).



By removing the sidewalk north of the parking area, more offset distance can be provided at the south property line to avoid this condition. Residents can walk thru the driveway to reach the street from the home. This would also reduce the variance for Impervious Coverage.

Two Driveway Aprons would Abut Each Other Here

8. We assume the existing well in the proposed building footprint will be removed and decommissioned.
9. The application requires both use and bulk variances.
10. The application, if approved, would result in new affordable housing units in the Borough.
11. The applicant should clarify whether there will be employees working at the group home. Number of employees, parking requirements, and hours of operation should be provided at the public hearing.

We trust these comments will assist the Board members in their review of the application materials.

Very truly yours,

C. P. STATILE, PA

Christopher P. Statile, P.E.
Planning Board Engineer

CPS/mr

cc: Antimo DelVecchio, Esq., Applicant's Counsel
Schwanewede/Hals Engineering Site Engineer
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