

CHRISTOPHER P. STATILE, P.A.

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND PLANNERS
DESIGN CONSULTANTS

CPSTATILE@AOL.COM

3 FIR COURT
OAKLAND, NJ 07436
(201) 337-7470
FAX (201) 337-7599

NEW YORK, NY

November 24, 2021

Chairman Dewey Burleson
and Members of the Planning Board
Borough of Hillsdale
380 Hillsdale Ave.
Hillsdale, NJ 07642

Regarding: **Block 2004, Lot 3, Borough of Hillsdale**
33 Ruckman Ave.: Variance Application PZ-11-21
New Concepts for Living: Applicants and Owners

Dear Chairman Burleson and Members of the Board:

We are in receipt of a bulk variance application, plans, a survey and photographs that were submitted to the Borough. The fees were submitted on October 28, 2021, which starts the 45-day clock for completeness. The other application materials were submitted on an earlier date.

The applicant submitted engineering plans prepared by Azzolina & Feury Engineering, Inc. that consist of the following six sheets dated September 21, 2021:

- Drawing 1 of 6 entitled, "Cover Sheet."
- Drawing 2 of 6 entitled, "Existing Conditions/Demolition Plan."
- Drawing 3 of 6 entitled, "Plot Plan."
- Drawing 4 of 6 entitled, "Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Plan."
- Drawing 5 of 6 entitled, "Tree Removal/Replacement Plan."
- Drawing 6 of 6 entitled, "Detail Sheet."

The applicant also submitted architectural plans prepared by William G. Brown, Architects, consisting of four sheets (A1-A4) that were "Issued for Variance" on October 22, 2021, as well as a survey prepared by Mark Martins Engineering, LLC dated February 28, 2019.

The applicant proposes to construct a six-bedroom group home. The applicant is appealing an October 5, 2021 denial letter from the Zoning Official. The application is for a "c" (bulk) due to the proposed improvements exceeding the permitted Building Coverage and Impervious Coverage, and due to the proposed home encroaching into the required Front Yard Setback Area.

General Site Description

Lot 3 consists of consists of 22,172 SF (0.51 acre) and is located on Ruckman Ave., across from the Meadowbrook Elementary School in the R-2 Zone District (minimum lot size 15,000 SF).

The property previously was improved with an existing dwelling, an accessory structure and an asphalt driveway. The buildings have been removed and some remnants of the driveway remain. It is located north of the prior Oriolo subdivisions.

Application

The applicant proposes to construct a new, single-story group home with eight parking spaces. The group home is generally proposed in the center of the lot with the parking is the rear. An asphalt driveway provides access from Ruckman Ave. The driveway runs along the side of the group home to the new parking area.

The home will contain six bedrooms, three baths, a library & media room, office, common kitchen, and laundry area. The rear portion of the building has a basement. The proposed improvements exceed the permitted building coverage and impervious coverage. The proposed group home will encroach into the required front yard setback area.

Completeness Review

The application was reviewed against the Checklist for Variance Applications. The application is complete and can be scheduled for a public hearing.

The application is can be deemed complete and scheduled for a public hearing.

Zoning Review

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

Proposed Variances

1. **Building Coverage:** 22.8% proposed (5,051 SF) vs. 20% maximum permitted (4,434 SF), a difference of 2.8% or 617 SF.
2. **Impervious Coverage:** 44.8% proposed (9,934 SF) vs. 30% maximum permitted (6,652 SF), a difference of 14.8% or 3,282 SF.
3. **Front Yard Setback:** 43.2 ft. proposed to covered concrete walk vs. 50 ft. required, a difference of 6.8 ft.

General Comments

1. The applicant must provide the required testimony for all variance relief. The positive and negative criteria must be satisfied.
2. The applicant should explain the need for the size, shape, and layout of the proposed building. The interior plans indicate six bedrooms.
3. 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.
4. The architecture plans do not match the site plans in relation to a covered rear driveway.
5. The applicant must dedicate an 8.5 ft. wide road widening easement to the Borough. This area can be used for the construction of sidewalks and would align the adjacent right-of-way lines.

Under 5:21-1.5 of the Resident Site Improvement Standards, the applicant is required to provide sidewalks. The rules are applicable for any site plan or variance application seeking relief before a land use board. The developer south of the subject site provided escrowed funds for the future installation of sidewalks along Ruckman Road.

6. Computations for stormwater management are required based on soil test pits witnessed by our office are required. Overflow "T's" must be provided at the roof leaders.
7. If the finished interior floor is El. 80. The proposed exterior grades on the site plan are El. 80 although the architectural plans call for a 1 ft. difference. The exterior grades must be lowered or the building raised to avoid drainage issues. Also, at least a 6" slope away from the dwelling is required by the building code which does not appear feasible on the north side of the building against the retaining wall.
8. The applicant must verify that the utility companies will permit joint trenches for gas and two water service lines on the north side of the building.
9. Refuse collection for six adults is a concern because there is no garage to store waste containers, and leaving containers at curbside is undesirable. Since Hillsdale has twice weekly curbside 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. Or a location for the storage of waste containers be provided.
10. Fifteen trees 6" caliper and over are shown for removal. Under the Borough's tree restitution ordinance, 30 replacement trees are required exclusive of any buffer plantings. Only seven replacement trees are proposed. Placement of new trees along Ruckman Road should be set back to allow for provision of a sidewalk.

11. The applicant is relying on an existing evergreen row along the rear property line to shield the parking area from adjacent residential dwellings. This plant material should be inspected by the Environmental Commission to determine suitability.

A more robust planting scheme should be provided for the new residence given the request for an Impervious Coverage variance.

12. No exterior lighting is shown.

13. The proposed HVAC condensers and generator are appropriately shown within the building setback lines. However, a setback from the exterior wall may be required for the generator which may place it outside the side yard setback line.

14. A soil movement permit application will be required at the time a building permit application is made.

15. A barrier-free parking space should be considered by the applicant and Board.


16. The front covered porch should be connected to the driveway via a walkway.

17. The proposed group home will provide affordable housing credits toward the Borough's Round 4 Affordable Housing obligation. Round 4 is scheduled to begin in July 2025.

We trust these review comments assist the Board in their review of this application.

Very truly yours,

C. P. STATILE, P.A.



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

CPS/mr

cc: Nylema Nabbie, Esq.
Azzolina & Feury Engineering, Inc.
William Smith, Esq.
New Concepts for Living, Applicant & Owner
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