

Principal Points Statement
173 Webster Avenue (Block 3804, Lot 3)
Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey
June 15, 2021

An application has been filed for the above-noted property with the Jersey City Zoning Board of Adjustment for approval of a variance for expansion of a non-conforming use pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70.d(2); and approval of a bulk “c” variance for minimum floor-to-ceiling height. The property is located R-1 One- and Two-Family Housing (R-1) District.

Project Description: The subject property is identified as Lot 3 on Block 3804 and is located at the corner of Webster Avenue and Griffith Street. Lot 3 is 25 feet wide by 100 feet deep with a total area of 2,500 square feet. The property is currently improved with a three-story, five-unit residential building. The subject property is located in the Heights neighborhood of Jersey City. The majority of uses along Webster Avenue are single-, two-, and multi-family residential buildings ranging in height from two to three stories.

The purpose of this application is to convert an existing three-story, five-unit building to a six-unit residential building by renovating the first floor to include an additional unit. The remaining two floors will remain unchanged and accommodate the other four units in the building, for a total of six units. The basement level contains the utilities for the building with gas and electric meters, hot water heaters, and boilers for all the residential units. The rear of the building fronting Griffith Street has a three-car garage that will remain, providing parking for tenants of the building.

Positive Criteria: The proposed improvement seeks to increase the number of residential units in a non-conforming five-unit residential structure in the R-1 District. The interior renovations will not modify the footprint of the building, only relocate interior walls to accommodate the 6th residential unit. This unit will have a dedicated entrance from the exterior of the building along Griffith Street. New windows will be installed on the first floor along Griffith Street, and a new insulated door and exterior light will be installed. The existing stucco along the pedestrian sidewalk will be covered with a new brick veneer and the fascia will be repainted. A new metal gutter and leader will be installed and relocated toward the rear of the building. Two new street trees will also be provided along Griffith Street which will improve the streetscape in the neighborhood. A new permeable brick paver patio will be installed at the rear of the building.

There are a number of existing multi-unit buildings in the area with densities ranging from 52 units to 157 units per acre. A full list of multi-unit buildings can be found in the table below.

IDENTIFIED MULTI-UNIT BUILDINGS IN STUDY AREA

BLOCK	LOT	ADDRESS	STORIES	UNITS ¹	LOT SIZE (ACRES)	LOT SIZE (SQUARE FEET)	DENSITY (UNITS/ACRE)	ON-SITE PARKING ²
3804	4	171 WEBSTER AVE.	3	3	0.06	2,500	52	1 space
3804	5	169 WEBSTER AVE.	1.5	3	0.06	2,500	52	0 spaces
3804	7	165 WEBSTER AVE.	3	4	0.06	2,500	70	0 spaces
3804	18	143.5 WEBSTER AVE.	2	3	0.04	1,680	78	0 spaces
3804	19	143 WEBSTER AVE.	2	3	0.04	1,680	78	0 spaces
3804	15	149 WEBSTER AVE.	3	7	0.06	2,446	125	0 spaces
3804	23	42 HUTTON ST.	3	9	0.06	2,500	157	0 spaces
3804	24	86 SHERMAN AVE.	3	10	0.11	4,883	89	0 spaces
3804	27	92 SHERMAN AVE.	2	3	0.05	2,300	57	0 spaces
3804	31	100 SHERMAN AVE.	3	9	0.11	5,000	78	0 spaces
3804	33	106 SHERMAN AVE.	3	4	0.06	2,500	70	0 spaces
3805	1	75 GRIFFITH ST.	3	3	0.05	2,000	65	3 spaces
3805	36	162 WEBSTER AVE.	3	6	0.06	2,500	105	0 spaces
3805	25	142 WEBSTER AVE.	2	5	0.06	2,500	87	0 spaces
3805	24	140 WEBSTER AVE.	2	5	0.06	2,500	87	0 spaces

The project seeks relief for the existing floor-to-ceiling height which will remain unchanged. The existing non-conforming floor-to-ceiling height on the first level is 7 feet 10 inches where a minimum of 9 feet is required. The changes to the existing first floor consist of modifying interior walls but does not change the footprint of the building.

The benefits of the improvements of the project outweigh the detriments; with benefits including installing a new brick veneer, updating windows and exterior doors, and removing exterior fencing along the pedestrian sidewalk. Permeable pavers are proposed in the rear yard, which will increase the permeability of stormwater on the subject property. Two new street trees will be installed along Griffith Street.

The granting of these variances will advance the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law and promote the general welfare. Granting the requested deviations will guide the appropriate use and development of the property in a manner that will promote the general welfare consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.a. through the provision of an improved layout for an appropriate multi-family building consistent with the zone plan and zoning ordinance. The project will also update the existing façade with modern materials and two new street trees providing a desirable visual environment consistent with N.J.S.A 40:55D-2.i.

¹ Based on Dresdner Robin's review of available tax map data from njtaxmaps.com

² Based on Dresdner Robin's review of aerial imagery.

Negative Criteria: Granting the requested variances will not result in a substantial detriment to the public good or the general welfare. The proposed project involves the conversion of an existing five-unit to a six-unit residential building consistent in terms of scale and use with surrounding area. The renovation to the first floor will add an additional unit to the building and does not seek to exacerbate the existing non-conforming bulk requirements of the property.

Granting the requested variances will not result in a substantial detriment to the zone plan or zoning ordinance. The proposed density is of similar intensity existing on Block 3804 and the surrounding streets. Furthermore, the project will provide a renovated apartment which provides a diversity of housing options and improved housing stock for the R-1 District. A full list of multi-unit buildings with various densities is provided earlier in this document.

The requested variances can be granted in that both the positive and negative criteria have been met pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70.d.2 and 40:55D-70.c.2.

The Applicant reserves the right to supplement the foregoing reasons with expert testimony at the Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing.