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City of Columbus
Board of Zoning Adjustment

**RE: 2000, 2050, 2060 South High Street – The Fort
Statement of Support of Variance
Variance Considerations**

Variance hardship, facts, and conditions

The property in question is an existing three-story manufacturing building constructed between 1880 and 1930. The site is a triangular site bounded by High Street to the West with minimal to no setbacks and the railroad to the Northeast with no full access around the building. The only available area for parking is in a central courtyard which is not expandable and to the existing site area to the South. This site configuration severely limits the sites access points and ability to expand parking, creating a site hardship.

- 1. Whether the property in question will yield a reasonable return or whether there can be any beneficial use of the property without a variance.*

Parking

Only a small section of the existing building could be utilized without the variance request. The maximum parking of 114 spaces only supports 165,000 square feet of manufacturing use and this severely limits the potential tenancy of the building and doesn't allow the full building to be utilized even if it was just manufacturing. There are other options for parking that utilize off-site parking and include access to the building through the existing viaduct under High Street.

Dumpster

The building is and can be utilized without the granting of the variance. This is a variance related to an order of magnitude related to screening and asking from relief from the letter of the code section as it relates to this site.

Setback

The building and the outdoor area in question can be utilize without the variance; however, the structure to the north of the patio will severely limit visibility to a tenant utilizing this outdoor space if it is set back from the natural edge with an artificial setback that in this case seems to have no viable use for the city.

2. *Whether the variance is substantial.*

Parking

The variance request is substantial as it relates to the parking. We are asking for a 600% increase in the parking. However, we are proposing other off-site parking to mitigate this request. We are also asking for a maximum based upon a long-term outlook for the building use.

Dumpster

We do not feel the variance to be substantial as the dumpster for all intents and purposes is screened on three sides.

Setback

We are asking to reduce the 10 ft. variance to 0 ft, but only for a distance of approximately 50 ft. of the lot frontage. This is minimal as the overall lot frontage is 700'.

3. *Whether the essential character of the neighborhood would be substantially altered or whether adjoining properties would suffer a substantial detriment as a result of the variance.*

Parking

The development of the Fort is intended to be a springboard bringing a vibrance to the neighborhood and starting a revitalization. We look to this being a springboard to enhancing the neighborhood and local neighborhood economic opportunities. We do not believe the variance request will be a detriment to the community, but it is intended to serve as a catalyst to improve the neighborhood.

Dumpster

The dumpster has existed for a minimum of 4 years in its current configuration and without formal screening. As this is an industrial are and given the surrounding site uses are industrial, we do not feel the character of the neighborhood would be substantially altered.

Setback

The existing outdoor space has existed in the configuration we are requesting it remain in. We anticipate additional use of this space in the future to activate the streets interaction with the building functions. The character of the neighborhood would only be altered if an artificial setback is enforced on this existing built condition.

4. *Whether the variance would adversely affect the delivery of governmental services.*

Parking

The variance request will not impact utilities or the delivery of government services.

Dumpster

The dumpster has existed for a minimum of 4 years in its current configuration and without formal screening. There has been no impact in the existing configuration on the delivery of governmental services.

Setback

We see not impact on the delivery of governmental services. Utilities are currently and will remain delivered to the site around this existing condition.

5. *Whether the property owner purchased the property with knowledge of the zoning restrictions.*

Parking

The property owner did not have full knowledge of all the zoning restrictions making some assumptions regarding the use of an existing building and site. They were made aware of the restrictions as the process of designing and documenting future alterations and tenancy of the building progressed.

Dumpster

The property owner did not have full knowledge of the zoning restriction as the current dumpster location and condition was similar to what existed when they purchased the building.

Setback

The property does have knowledge of a potential setback but is looking to preserve and enhance existing built condition.

6. *Whether the property owner's predicament feasibly can be obviated through some method other than a variance.*

Parking

Substantial development of the site cannot be obviated through another method with improvements on the site. More parking is required, and the site does not support additional parking. There are off-site parking options being explored but these are not available at this time.

Dumpster

The property owner can provide screening. This is a question of necessity and scope given the existing conditions and location of the site.

Setback

This area of the site can be developed for outdoor space without the variance.

7. *Whether the spirit and intent behind the zoning requirement would be observed and substantially justice done by granting the variance.*

Parking

We feel the spirit and intent behind the zoning requirement would be observed and substantial justice done by granting the variance. The building can be a catalyst to the neighborhood and has a significant variety of uses with appropriate parking. The site configuration provides a significant hardship to modern development of the site without a variance. There are optional off site parking options available for consideration that may impact the scope of the variance.

Dumpster

We feel the spirit behind the zoning requirement would be observed and substantial justice done by granting the variance as the dumpster area is a part of the loading dock area and the site configuration and essentially screens the dumpster except for an area on the south that is adjacent industrial manufacturing properties.

Setback

We feel the spirit behind the zoning requirement would be observed and substantial justice done by granting the variance as the sunken site area is an existing built condition that is reinforced by the building configuration. The setback does nothing to benefit the neighborhood or city and is inappropriate for this condition.