



MEMORANDUM

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To: Montgomery Township Zoning Board of Adjustment

From: Michael F. Sullivan, ASLA, AICP
James Clavelli, PP, AICP

Re: **Renard Management, Inc.**
Use Variance, Height Variance, FAR Variance, Major Site Plan
Supplemental Review Memorandum 1
1026 County Road 518
Block 29002, Lots 49 and 50
HC Highway Commercial District

Date: February 15, 2024 supplemental report to November 22, 2023 report

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of Report: The applicant submitted a revised architectural plan on January 5, 2023 that included substantive changes to the building façade and minor changes to the interior layout. This report constitutes a supplemental review that details and analyzes those changes. The applicant also had their first hearing on January 23, 2024, where there was discussion regarding the submission of additional materials related to the building. Those have not yet been received by this office. This supplemental report should be read in tandem with the previously submitted report dated November 22, 2023.

2. PLAN CHANGES

2.1. Primary Building Architectural Plan Changes – Exterior: As recommended in our report dated November 17, 2024, the applicant has made substantial changes to the exterior of the building. Where previously the exterior contained a non-stylized, contemporary design with dark colors and metallic siding, the revised architectural drawings contain a brick façade with additional windows, greater façade articulation, and other more desirable composition of building elements that reads as a faux 20th century industrial structure.

While this design is an improvement over the previous submission, and several recommendations from our previous report were incorporated into the design, this office still recommends changes to the plan.

John Hatch, FAIA
George Hibbs, AIA
Brian Slauch, AICP
Michael Sullivan, AICP
Michael Hanrahan, AIA
Mary Beth Lonergan, AICP



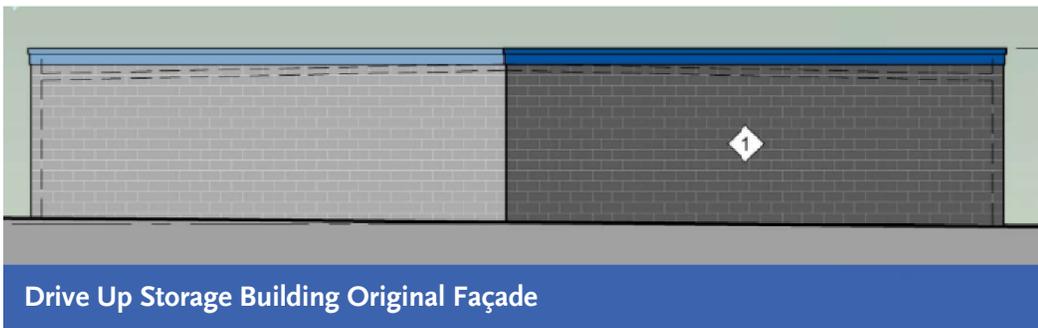
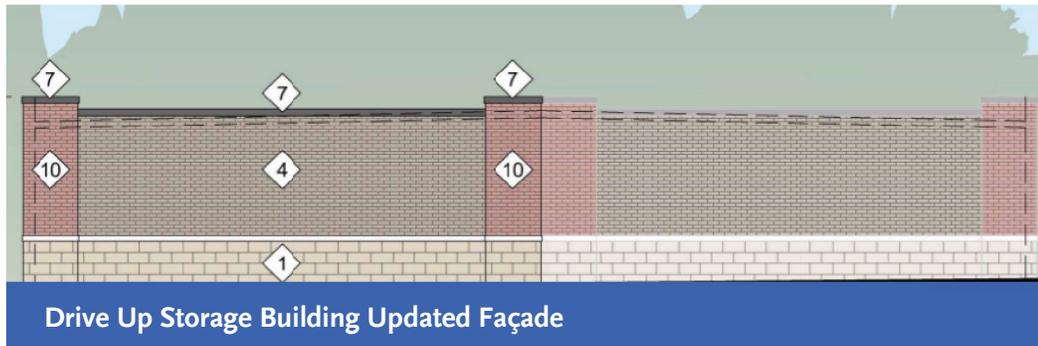
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- 2.2. **Primary Building Architectural Plan Changes - Interior:** Resulting from changes to the exterior of the building, the interior of the building has been modified to include “active” corridors and “display” corridors. The active corridors extend from existing corridors to the southern/street facing side of the building. The display corridors also face the southern/street facing side of the building. These are included to facilitate the addition of more windows on the front (southern), street facing façade. Two small rooms in the southwestern corner of the building on the first floor have been changed from “Fire” and “Electrical” rooms to a combined break room that is adjacent to the office. The applicant testified during the January 23rd hearing that the display corridors are not utilized by customers, and that they are meant to display to passersby what utilizing an internal storage facility would look like. If these are intended to allow visibility into the building for commercial messaging, it is recommended that they be eliminated.



- 2.3. **Secondary Drive Up Storage Building Architectural Plan Changes - Exterior:** Similar changes were made to the exterior of the proposed drive thru storage building, as indicated in the following images, to tie its design to the primary building.



3. ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED CHANGES AND OUTSTANDING CONCERNS

- 3.1. **Recommended Changes to Primary Storage Building:** The following changes to the architectural drawings are recommended.
- 3.1.1. The faux wood material (item number 5 on the materials sheet, called “Metal Sales, Horizontal Sizing, Sandstone) is incompatible with the building, and should be replaced with a complementary masonry material.
 - 3.1.2. It is recommended that samples of the proposed exterior materials be brought to a future Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing so that the Board may see the material in person.
 - 3.1.3. Canopies should be uniform across the building in height and composition.



- 3.1.4. The depth of offsets and articulation should be clear to that the Board can have a clear understanding of the resulting shadow lines.
- 3.2. **Recommended Changes to Drive Up Storage Building:** This office recommends that additional pilasters be added to the southern, street-facing elevation to create more visual emphasis on that façade.
- 3.3. **Scale of Building As it Relates to Residences in Rocky Hill to the East:** The scale of the proposed primary storage building is out of scale with neighboring residences in Rocky Hill. The proposed building will be 42.5 ft. in height. This office does not have the exact height of the neighboring residence, but as it is a two-story dwelling, and 35 feet is the maximum permitted height in the R-1 zone where the building is located, it is likely less than or equal to 35 feet in height. The proposed principal storage facility is 20% greater in height.

More importantly in terms of scale, the proposed floor area ratio of the building is 1.25 (123,259 sf. in total area), considerably larger than what is permitted. The east facing wall that faces in the direction of the residential neighborhood in Rocky Hill will be 171.3 feet in length and setback from the property line by only 25 feet. This is considerably longer than the east facing wall of the previous building that had occupied the site for several decades, which was ±63 ft. in length and setback 40 feet from the adjacent property line.

Based on the first public hearing, attendees and board members would like more descriptive exhibits to be able to visualize the project in context rather than simple plans and building elevations. To that end, it is recommended that exhibits be prepared for the continued public hearing that consist of a series of ground-based, three-dimensional perspective renderings that show the proposed buildings located in the context within which it would be situated. These renderings should include existing adjacent and nearby buildings, including the Wawa and adjacent homes in Rocky Hill. The number of views should be sufficient to provide the Board and the public with sufficient information to assess the project and its potential impacts upon the surrounding area. The following views appear to be most relevant and, at a minimum, should be provided:

1. A view from the northbound corner of Route 206 and CR 518.
2. A view from CR 518 westbound within Rocky Hill.
3. A view from the Princeton North Shopping Center (in between the other two views).



This list should not be considered as exhaustive, and additional views may be warranted, based on the needs of the Board or the public.

Beyond the direction of the views, the elevation of the perspective viewpoint should be from that of a person seated in a car (~4') or standing (5'). The topography of the area and the site should be modeled as well to provide as accurate a depiction as possible, recognizing that there is some substantial changes in elevation within the immediate area.

A similar request was made by this office to the applicant in an email dated January 25, 2024.

4. CHANGES IN RELIEF

- 4.1. **Visual Breaks: *Variance relief is no longer required.*** §16-4.12e.5(a) requires that building exteriors shall have vertical and/or horizontal offsets to create visual breaks along each facade. Long, monotonous, uninterrupted walls are not permitted. The outer walls previously did not contain any breaks or offsets and continued the same pattern from end to end on each side. This has been changed and there are visual breaks on all elevations. No variance is required.
- 4.2. **Wall Offsets: *Variance relief is no longer required.*** §16-4.12e.5(b) requires that to the extent appropriate to the architectural design, building wall offsets, including projections such as balconies and canopies, recesses, and changes in floor levels shall be used to add architectural interest and variety and to mitigate the visual appearance of a simple, long wall. Previously, only the southern elevation, which faces County Road 518, contained offsets. Offsets have been added to each wall. Variance relief is no longer required.

5. MATERIALS REVIEWED FOR THIS SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

- 5.1. *Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan with Use and Bulk Variances*, 21 sheets, prepared by Joshua M. Sewald, PE and Daniel A. Tarabokija, PE, Dynamic Engineering, dated June 8, 2023, revised to December 18, 2023.
- 5.2. *Architectural Drawings*, 6 sheets, prepared by Louis W. Vandeloecht, ARCO Murray, dated December 21, 2023.