

To: Ridgewood Zoning Board of Adjustment
Carmine R. Alampi, Esq

From: John Barree, PP, AICP
Gabrielle Thurm, Associate Planner

CC: Jane Wondergem, Board Secretary
Allyson Kasetta, Esq
Christopher Rutishauser, PE

Date: February 5, 2025

Re: ZBA 24-38 55 North Broad LLC
55 North Broad Street
Block 3804, Lot 2.01
"D" Variance and "C" Bulk Variances

As requested, I have reviewed the following materials in preparation of this report:

- Village of Ridgewood Board of Adjustment Application Form, received November 26, 2024
- Completeness Review Response, prepared by Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated January 17, 2025
- Village of Ridgewood Certification of Taxes and Assessments, dated January 15, 2025
- 11-sheet "Brand Book", prepared by PhiladelphiaSign, dated June 19, 2023
- 7-page Completed Checklist, no date
- 1-sheet Floor Plan, prepared by Core States Group, no date
- Description of Project Memorandum, prepared by Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated October 14, 2024
- Checklist Waiver Memorandum, prepared by Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated October 14, 2024
- Zoning Relief Memorandum, prepared by Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated October 14, 2024
- Outside Agency Approval List, prepared by Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated October 14, 2024
- 67-page Title Report and related attachments, no date
- Stormwater Management Statement, prepared by Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated October 11, 2024
- Traffic Impact Study, prepared by Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated October 11, 2024
- 4-sheet Elevations and 3D Renderings, prepared by Core States Group, dated October 4, 2024
- 15-sheet Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan, prepared by Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated October 11, 2024
- 1-sheet Survey, prepared by Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated April 22, 2024
- Transmittal Letter, prepared by Carmine R. Alampi, LLC Attorneys at Law, dated November 26, 2024

Property Description

The subject property located at 55 North Broad Street, Block 3804 Lot 2.01 is a 16,663 square foot (0.383 acres) lot with frontage on North Broad Street, Franklin Avenue, and Chestnut Street. The property is currently developed with a two-story masonry building with a drive through. Most recently, Blue Foundry bank was the property tenant, but the building has been vacant for several years with the lot generally being used for parking. The building is located on the western side of the property, the remainder of the property acts as a parking lot.

Aerial of the Property



Project Description

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing buildings and to develop a new 3,344 square foot Chase Bank with 22 parking spaces and a drive-through. The bank will be located on the northeastern corner of the property. The bank will contain nine offices, a conference room, lounge restrooms, and a transaction counter, ATM access room, cash room, and data room.

The drive through is to be located immediately east of the building, along the eastern wall of the bank. The drive-through is accessed via a 10-foot-wide driveway that exits directly onto Chestnut Street. To the southwest of the building there are 16 parking spaces and directly to the south of the building there are an additional six parking spaces, two of which are handicapped accessible spaces. Two-way driveways provide site access to and from North Broad Street and Chestnut Street in a separate circulation pattern from the drive-through.

The landscape plan consists of 15 Silver Sword Azalea shrubs, 6 Bailmer Hydrangea shrubs, a total of 32 evergreen shrubs, and several grasses, perennials, and shrub areas. Landscaping will be located on the north and east sides of the building, and in various locations in the parking lot.

The lighting plan consists of 6 types of light fixtures throughout the site. On the exterior of the bank 5 Bullet Recessed Canopy Lights will be mounted at 10-feet, six Lumiere Lanterra 9004 Cylinder LED Wall Sconces will be mounted at 10-feet, and one Lumark Crosstour Maxx LED Wall Light will be mounted at 20-feet. Four additional light fixtures will be situated throughout the parking lot, two Evolve EACL Series LED Area lights with two heads at 180-degrees, one with two heads at 90-degrees, and one with three heads at 90-degrees.

The applicant is proposing 3 wall mounted signs, a typical Chase identification sign with "CHASE" in illuminated white letters with the Chase logo in blue on each of the north, south, and east facades of the building. The signs are 36.9 square feet in area (twenty-four inches tall and fourteen feet and half an inch long). Additionally, one double-faced illuminated pylon is proposed on the western side of the property at the North Broad Street entrance.

Zoning

The site is in the Village's B-1 and B-2 Retail Business District. The proposed bank and drive-through is not permitted in the zone and requires a d-1 use variance. The bulk table below indicates the project's compliance and deviations from the bulk requirements:

Bulk Schedule				
	Required B-1	B-2	Proposed	Variance
Max. Floor Area Ratio	50%	45%	21.2%	-
Max. Coverage by Improvement	-	90%	86.4%	-
Max. Building Height	45 ft	45 ft	21.5 ft	-
Min. Front Yard Setback	Franklin: 0.8 ft Chestnut: 0.2 ft North Broad: 1.8		Franklin: 2.4 ft Chestnut: 2.4 ft N. Broad: 88.8 ft	-
Min. Side Yard Setback	None required, or 12 ft minimum when provided.		5 ft	Yes
Min. Rear Yard Setback	six inches for each foot of height of the principal building or 10 feet, whichever is greater = 21 x 6 = 126 inches = 10.5 ft		51.4 ft	-

Parking Standards (190-90 and 190-121)			
	Required	Proposed	Variance
Min. Off-Street Parking Spaces (190-121)	1 space per 200 sq. ft = 17 spaces	22 spaces	-
Min. Accessible Parking Spaces (190-121)	1 space	2 spaces	-
Parking space dimensions (190-90)	9 x 20 ft 9 x 18 ft (with two-foot overhang)	9 x 20 ft 9 x 18 ft	-
Min. Driveway Width (190-90)	10 ft	Complies	-
Min. Access Aisle Width (190-90)	12 ft	Complies	-
Location of parking (190-121)	front, side or rear yards	Complies	-
Parking Setback (190-121)	Parking areas in the front yard shall be set back at least 5 feet from all other lot lines, except where such parking areas are connected with other parking areas.	3.3 ft	YES

Lighting Standards (190-85)			
	Required	Proposed	Variance
Shielding of Fixtures	All lighting fixtures shall be directed downward and shall be equipped with the necessary shielding	Complies	-
Max. Height	20 ft	20 ft	-

Additional Standards			
	Required	Proposed	Variance
Waste Removal and Recycling (190-95-B)	Every site plan shall show an area reserved for storage and removal of trash, refuse and recyclable materials	None proposed	YES

Sign Standards (190-122)			
	Required	Proposed	Variance
Max. Number of Principal Signs	a corner lot may have a second principal sign. One sign shall be located on one street and a second sign shall be located on the second or side street.	5 Principal signs (4 wall, 1 freestanding)	YES
Attached Principal Signs			
Sign Direction	parallel to the face of the wall	Complies	-
Max. extension from wall	6 inches	Complies	-
Max. distance from the top of the sign to the bottom edge	16 inches	24 inches	YES
Sign Width	Max. 75% of the store front or wall	Complies	-
Sign Elevation	Min. 7 feet	Complies	-
Freestanding Signs	Permitted when the building is set back at least 40 feet from the front curbline	Complies (103.6 ft)	-
Max. Area	12 sq. ft	24.2 sq. ft	YES
Max. Height	10 ft	10 ft	-
Location of sign	No part of the sign shall be located closer than five feet to the property line	Complies (5ft)	-

Variances Required

- 1) D-1 Use Variance – The applicant is proposing a new drive-through bank in the B-1 Zone, where drive-through banks are not permitted.
- 2) Insufficient Side Yard Setback (190-111.E(3)) – No side yard setback is required, but if one is provided, it shall be at least 12 feet. The applicant is proposing a 5 foot side yard setback.
- 3) Insufficient Parking Setback (190-121-F2e) – A parking setback of at least 5 feet from all other lot lines is required, where a setback of 3.3 feet is proposed.

- 4) Excessive Number of Principal Signs (190-122-E2a) – On a corner lot, two principal signs are permitted, where a total of 4 principal signs are proposed.
- 5) Excessive distance from the top of the sign to the bottom edge (190-122-E2b4) – Signage is permitted to have a distance of 16 inches from the top of the sign to the bottom, where a distance of 24 inches is proposed.
- 6) Excessive Area for a Freestanding Sign (190-122-E2c1) – Signage is permitted to have an area of up to 12 square feet, where an area of 24.2 square feet is proposed.

Design Exceptions

- 1) Waste Removal and Recycling Not Provided (190-95-B) – Every site plan is required to show an area reserved for storage and removal of trash, refuse and recyclable materials, where none is proposed.

Planning Comments

Variances and Exceptions

- 1) The applicant requires a d(1) Use Variance to permit the proposed use. To grant this relief, the applicant must satisfy both the positive and negative criteria as established by the Municipal Land Use Law and relevant case law:
 - a) Positive Criteria: Since the use is not inherently beneficial and there does not appear to be hardship associated with developing the property, the applicant must demonstrate that the site is particularly suited for the use and that there are special reasons to grant the variance, which generally requires a showing that the project advances the purposes of zoning.
 - b) Negative Criteria: The applicant must demonstrate that the use will not be a substantial detriment to the public good, and that it will not substantially impair the intent and purpose of the zoning ordinance and master plan.
 - c) It should be noted that the site was previously operated as a bank with a drive-through for many years with a different circulation configuration. The applicant should provide testimony about how the proposed site modifications may represent improvements to the current design.
- 2) The applicant requires bulk “c” relief for a variety of proposed conditions. The required proofs shall be consistent with the standards found in the MLUL at section 40:55D-70.c, and shall demonstrate one of the following:

- a) C(1) "hardship" variance relief can be granted if there is a particular physical aspect of the property size, shape, topography or other characteristic that creates a hardship that prevents conformance with the Ordinance.
 - b) C(2) "benefits vs. detriments" variance relief can be granted if the applicant demonstrates that the proposed relief furthers the purposes of zoning and that the benefits of the proposal outweigh the detriments.
 - c) In either case, the applicant must satisfy the "negative criteria" through a demonstration that the proposed relief will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, and that the proposed relief can be granted without substantial impairment to the Village's Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
- 3) The applicant potentially requires design exception relief pursuant to section 40:55D-51 of the municipal land use law related to the provision of waste removal facilities. To justify the exception if required, the applicant shall provide testimony demonstrating that strict compliance with the site plan design standards is impracticable.

Site Layout

- 4) A portion of neighboring Lot 4 juts into the property. It appears that the proposed circulation patterns will cross through a portion of the that property. Are there any easements or other formal access rights in place or proposed?
- 5) No waste removal and recycling area is provided in the site plans. The applicant shall address how storage and removal of waste and recycling will be addressed on the site. If the board determines that interior storage is adequate and no dedicated enclosure is necessary on the plans, variance relief may not be required.

Parking and Circulation

- 6) The applicant should provide testimony regarding the width of all proposed entrances and exits from the site.
- 7) The applicant should provide testimony regarding the size of the parking stalls. Parking stalls 9x18ft are permitted with the presence of a 2ft overhang, the applicant shall confirm the presence of such overhang. Additional relief may be required.

Operations

- 8) The applicant shall provide testimony about general operations including:
- a) Frequency, hours, and types of deliveries.
 - b) Anticipated number of employees during the peak shift.
 - c) Types of waste generated and frequency and timing of collection.

Architecture

- 9) The applicant should provide testimony about the exterior finish materials, and compatibility of the design in the B-1 and B-2 Zone.
- 10) The applicant is seeking relief for a variety of conditions related to the proposed signage. The applicant shall provide testimony addressing the following:
- a) A freestanding sign is proposed along North Broad Street, which is not generally in character with the buildings, uses, and character of that street frontage. What benefit is the freestanding pylon intended to bring to the site? Will it be visible to motorists with cars parked along North Broad?
 - b) The table on sheet C-4 of the civil plans indicates that the proposed freestanding sign will be 12.1 feet in height and require variance relief. The signage package shows the freestanding pylon as 10 feet in height. The applicant shall provide testimony clarifying the height and whether relief is required.
 - c) The applicant shall provide testimony about the proposed illumination of the signage and the anticipated hours during which they will be illuminated.
 - d) The signage plan and architectural plans have the cardinal directions on some of the elevations and signage locations mislabeled. It is clear which elevation is which, but the labels should be corrected should the board act favorably on the application.

Miscellaneous

- 11) The application shall comply with Ordinance Section 190-144.C related to the imposition of non-residential development fees.