



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN PLANNING OFFICE
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TO: Planning Board Members
FROM: Michael A. Lumbis, Planner *ML*
SUBJECT: Waiver of Site Plan Approval – VL-3 Marble Street
DATE: May 28, 2015

Request: Waiver of Site Plan Approval for the construction of a 1,659 square foot building at VL-3 Marble Street, Parcel Number 4-27-402.100
Applicant: Ron England of Al's Siding
Proposed Use: Storage Building for Al's Siding
Property Owner: Al's Siding

Submitted:

Property Survey: Yes	Preliminary Architectural Drawings: No
Site Plan: Yes	Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: No
Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: No	Construction Time Schedule: No
Landscaping and Grading Plan: Grading (no contours)	Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: No

SEQRA: Unlisted	County Review Required: No
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Zoning Information:

District: Heavy Industry	Maximum Lot Coverage: 100%
Setback Requirements: All Yards – 0'	Buffer Zone Required: No

Project Overview: The applicant proposes to construct a 1,659 square foot building to serve as a storage building for his siding business. The building will be located in the center of the parcel, which consists almost entirely of crushed stone. A 22 square foot shed currently exists on the site. The applicant received a permit for and began construction on the project. A 52' by 32' foot concrete foundation was built but construction has been halted pending the approval of the site plan.

The applicant has submitted a request for a waiver of site plan approval. In order to be eligible for waiver of site plan approval, a project must meet the four criteria that are listed in Section 310-55 B of the City of Watertown Zoning Ordinance, which is transcribed below:

“Such site plan approval may only be waived if, in the judgment of the City Planning Board, based on the application for a building permit with supporting documentation, the proposed new building construction or expansion:

- 1) Does not involve a change in the boundaries of the property, and
- 2) Does not represent the initial building on the property, and
- 3) Is minor and incidental in size to the existing building pattern, size and coverage on the property, but in no event shall exceed 2,500 square feet, and
- 4) Does not effectively change or impair the overall grading, circulation, drainage, utility services, and appearance and visual effect of the property and is also otherwise consistent with all purposes of this chapter.”

It is Staff’s conclusion that the applicant fails criteria numbers 2 and 4 on this list. The proposed building is the initial building on the site, changes the utility services and the appearance and visual effect of the property. It is therefore Staff’s recommendation that this project should be subject to a full Site Plan Review.

The City Engineering Department and Planning Office performed a limited project review based on the information that was submitted. Our comments are listed below and should be incorporated into the full site plan submission assuming that the Planning Board concurs that the project is not eligible for a waiver. A review of the additional required materials will be performed once those materials are received.

Parking and Vehicular Circulation: Section 310-50 of the Zoning Ordinance states that areas used for storage can be subtracted from the required parking calculations; therefore no designated parking is required for the project. Section 310-49 of the Zoning Ordinance requires a 10’ by 30’ loading space for storage use. The applicant identifies this loading space on the site plan.

The applicant is not proposing any paved areas on the site. The site plan, as proposed, involves installing a crushed stone parking lot across the entire frontage on Marble Street and Eagle Avenue. This proposal is unacceptable. Access points to the property need to be controlled from the City Streets. A grassy median should be provided between the street and the proposed parking lot to delineate the access points and to provide for snow storage. Internal traffic circulation plans must be submitted to the Engineering Office.

Landscaping: There is no new landscaping currently proposed for the site. The applicant contends that the entire site consists of gravel, directly over bedrock, and is therefore unsuitable for any planting or landscaping. However, the applicant had already performed some work on the land, prior to applying for this waiver, which resulted in the displacement of a thin layer of soil and vegetation from the surface. The displacement is evidenced by a talus pile at the eastern end of the lot, where the pre-existing surface materials were pushed. A landscaping plan shall be provided.

Grading, Drainage and Utilities: The applicant states that the building will not connect to any water or sewer facilities. However, there is an existing catch basin in the center of the site that storm water will presumably drain to. The grading plan and engineering report must address and provide additional information regarding these items.

SEQRA: A State Environmental Review Short Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) was submitted. Section 617.5 of the State Environmental Quality Review Act states that “(7) Construction or expansion of a primary or accessory/appurtenant, non-residential structure or facility involving less than 4,000 square feet of gross floor area and not involving a change in zoning or a use variance and consistent with local land use controls, but not radio

communication or microwave transmission facilities;” is a type II action that requires no further review under SEQR. Therefore, the EAF was not required, and therefore not reviewed.

Other Comments: The following note needs to be added to the drawing: “All work to be performed within the City of Watertown margin will require sign-off from a Professional Engineer, licensed and currently registered to practice in the State of New York, that the work was built according to the approved site plan and applicable City of Watertown standards. Compaction testing will be required for all work to be performed within the City of Watertown margin and must be submitted to the City of Watertown Codes Department.”

In addition, the applicant should forward PDF files of the entire set of drawings to the City Engineering Department whenever any revisions are made to the drawings.

The property owner shall obtain the following permits prior to construction: a Building Permit and a City Permit for any work within the City Right-of-Way.

Summary: It is Staff’s conclusion that the application does not meet the criteria to make it eligible for a waiver of site plan approval and that this project should be subject to a full Site Plan Review.

cc: Robert J. Slye, City Attorney
Brian Drake, Civil Engineer II
Ron England, AI’s Siding
Edward G. Olley Jr., AIA