

Bexley Board of Zoning and Planning

Planning Staff Report – March 27, 2025



Conditional Use Permit, Variance, and Certificate of Appropriateness: **420 Cassady Avenue**

Application #: BZAP-24-50

Location: 420 N. Cassady Avenue

Zoning: Mixed Use Commercial (MUC)

Request:

Conditional Use Permit:

- The applicant is seeking a conditional use permit per Bexley code section 1254.09 to permit first floor residential use within a new multi-family building in a Mixed Use Commercial District. **UPDATE: Approved by BZAP at their January 23, 2025, meeting (see Section D. Additional Comments for approval language)**

Variance:

- The applicant is seeking a variance from section 1254.17 to allow an accessory structure (pergola) in the side yard. **UPDATE: Approved by BZAP at their January 23, 2025, meeting (see Section D. Additional Comments for approval language)**
- The applicant is seeking a variance to waive the fence requirement per Bexley Code section 1264.05. **UPDATE: Approved by BZAP at their January 23, 2025, meeting (see Section D. Additional Comments for approval language)**

Certificate of Appropriateness:

- The applicant is seeking site plan and architectural review and approval to allow a 3-story structure with a commercial use on the 1st floor, and residential on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors.
- The applicant is seeking approval to allow demolition approval for the existing structure.

Applicant: Bill Downing

Owner: Bexley Apartments LLC

A. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval a Certificate of Appropriateness base on conformance with the Mixed Use District (MUC) Design Standards (1254.11).

Staff supports the Architectural Review Board, which recommended approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Should the BZAP choose to act on the Certificate of Appropriateness request, staff recommends

conditions of approval as listed at the conclusion of this report.

B. BACKGROUND



The site is located on the southeast corner of Cassady Avenue and Columbus Avenue.

Zoning: The project is located in the Mixed Use Commercial District (MUC) (1254.03).

C. CONSIDERATIONS

Plan Conformance

The City of Bexley adopted a Diversity Equity & Inclusion Strategy on August 11, 2020, as an amendment to the Bexley Strategic Plan. One of the primary goals of the plan is:

Goal #3: Create an Inclusive Greater Bexley Community

Form an open and welcoming Bexley. Work to combat racism and discrimination in the City. Engage people and circumstances with fairness, justice, impartiality, honesty, balance, compassion, decency, reasonableness, and an open mind.

Each goal includes specific action items, and the one most directly related to this application is:

Goal Three Action Items

2. Continue to encourage the CIC in their efforts to identify affordable housing opportunities for people with low incomes as part of new development (including but not limited to rezoning and rehabbing current and future building and projects) as well as on its own.

Site Impacts

The site design is appropriate for a mixed-use corridor, with the building sited adjacent to the roadway and parking located to the rear. The Mixed Use Commercial (MUC) District site development regulations and design standards have largely been met.

Mixed Use Commercial (MUC) District Site Development Regulations

The MUC district regulations (1154.10) are as follows:

Lot Requirements

- This district has no minimum lot requirements.

Setbacks

- The front setback is 0 feet, within the required range of 0-15 feet: standard is met.
- The rear setback is over 50 feet, in excess of the minimum requirement of 15 feet: standard is met.

- There is no side yard setback requirement in this district. For the information of the BZAP, the side yard setback to the south is approximately 10 feet, with the northern lot line abutting the right-of-way due to the position as a corner site.

Height

- The proposed structure is 3 stories and 39' 10" in height. The code allows 3 stories: standard is met.

Mixed Use District (MUC) District Design Standards

The proposed development meets the standards of applicability for review under this section (1254.11(a) through (e)). The application has been evaluated with regard to the applicable design standards as follows:

MUC District Design Standards		Met / Not Met
(f)	A principal building shall be oriented to address and be nearly parallel to a primary street. Nearly parallel means within 15 degrees of being parallel.	Met
(g)	The width of a principal building along a primary building frontage shall be a minimum of sixty (80) percent of the lot width.	Met
(h)	A primary building frontage shall incorporate a primary entrance door	Met
(i)	A building frontage that exceeds a width of 50 feet shall include vertical piers or other vertical visual elements to break the plane of the building frontage. The vertical piers or vertical elements shall be spaced at intervals of 15 feet to 35 feet along the entire building frontage	Met
(j)	For a primary building frontage of a commercial use, a minimum of 60 percent of the area between the height of two feet and ten feet above grade shall be in clear window glass that permits a full, unobstructed view of the interior to a depth of at least four feet. For the secondary building frontage, the pattern of window glass shall continue from the primary building frontage a minimum distance of ten feet.	Met
(k)	For any new installation or replacement of upper story windows, the new/replacement windows must be clear/non-tinted glass.	Met
(l)	At least 25% of the second and third floor building frontages (as measured from floor to ceiling) must be window glass. This requirement may be waived if historic documentation (e.g. historic photos) from when the building was first constructed can be provided that shows a different percentage of window glass was used on the second and third floor building frontages. In such cases, the historic percentage must be maintained.	Met
(m)	All roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened from public view to the height of the equipment. The design, colors and materials used in screening shall be architecturally compatible with the rooftop and the aesthetic character of the building.	To be clarified by applicant
(n)	Backlit awnings are not permitted.	Met
(o)	The front yard shall be planted with live vegetation and a shade tree(s) (in addition to any street tree requirements), except for paved areas expressly designed for vehicular and pedestrian use. The minimum number of shade trees required is determined by the formula of one tree per 30 lineal feet, or fraction thereof, of frontage.	UPDATE: Approved by T+PG
(p)	At the time of planting a new shade tree shall have a minimum two-inch caliper trunk and new shrubs for screening shall have a minimum height	UPDATE: Approved by

	of 24-inches, and be maintained at that height or greater.	T+PG
	(q) For all street tree planting beds, a minimum exposed space of 60 square feet shall be provided and edged in granite curbing.	n/a – tree lawn condition here
	(r) All such landscape plantings and features shall be properly maintained, weeded, and watered, and any loss of plant materials shall be replaced in keeping with the approved landscape plan, or within minor modification to the landscape plan according to City Staff approval. The installation and operation of an irrigation system may be required for any planting area. In such cases, the irrigation system must remain operable.	UPDATE: Approved by T+PG
	(s) The use of landscape features such as pedestrian furniture, decorative railings, tree guards, trash receptacles, bollards and similar such accessories shall reference the Main Street Design Guidelines.	UPDATE: Approved by T+PG
	(t) A fence shall be provided along a lot line that borders a residentially zoned or used property at a height of 8 feet, as per the requirements in Section 1264.05 .	UPDATE: Variance granted
	(u) A surface parking lot or vehicular circulation area shall be screened from all abutting public streets with a minimum 4-foot solid masonry or stone wall; or a minimum 4-foot decorative metal tube or solid metal bar fence (excluding chain link, wire mesh or other similar material), with a minimum 3-foot wide landscaped area along the parking lot side of the fence.	UPDATE: Approved by T+PG
	(v) Landscaping is needed for surface parking lots in order to further screen parking from the view of public rights-of-way, provide mitigation for stormwater through reducing, slowing and cooling runoff, and to create visual relief from large pavement areas. This landscaping might be in well-designed border plantings that frame the lot or within landscape beds large enough to sustain plant growth.	UPDATE: Approved by T+PG
	(w) Dumpsters shall be located behind the principal building and be screened from public view on all 4 sides, to the height of the dumpster.	Met
	(x) Ground-mounted mechanical equipment shall be located behind the principal building and be screened from public view to the height of the equipment	To be clarified by applicant
	(y) The height of any parking lot light pole/fixture shall not exceed 18 feet above grade.	No pole lighting in parking area indicated – to be clarified by applicant
	(z) When located within 25 feet of a residential district the height of a light fixture shall not exceed 14 feet above grade.	No pole lighting in parking area indicated – to be clarified by applicant
	(aa) All lighting must use cut-off type fixtures, to limit glare, and avoid directing light onto neighboring property, streets, or toward the night sky.	To be clarified by applicant
	(bb) Parking, stacking and circulation aisles are not permitted between the principal building and a street right-of-way line. This standard does not apply to existing buildings unless they are expanded by fifty (50) percent or more gross floor area.	Met

(cc) Additional curb cuts are not permitted	Met
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Parking

In the Mixed Use Commercial (MUC) District, the parking requirements are determined per code sections (1262.02), (1262.03 (c)). Calculations provided below:

Parking standards	Required for 420 Cassady proposal
Residential: 1 per unit	16 spaces
Retail sales, service or office uses: 1 per 300 s.f.	10 spaces
Reduction of up to 25% for on-street parking	- 6 spaces
TOTAL REQUIRED:	20 spaces
ON-SITE PROVIDED:	24 spaces

The applicant has provided 24 off-street parking spaces, including two handicap accessible spaces. This meets the code parking requirement for the site. There are also 7 designated on-street spaces immediately adjacent to this site as well as additional on-street parking nearby.

A significant positive aspect of the site plan is the removal of two existing curb cuts (one on Cassady and one on Columbus). With regard to parking, this provides a greater opportunity for on-street parking adjacent to the site. The applicant has also proposed using permanent bump-outs to protect the parking on Cassady, contributing to overall safety improvements and the long-term development and infrastructure planning for the corridor.

D. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**UPDATE: Architectural Review Board Recommendation**

The ARB reviewed the application at their March 13, 2025, meeting. The ARB Decision and Record of Action regarding this application states:

- *The Architectural Review Board recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the existing structure and build a new 3 story residential multi-family structure noting that the rock cast base should be used rather than a utility brick base. Any changes to the design will be reviewed by the City's Design consultant.*

The applicant, Bill Downing, agreed to the findings of fact and decision of the Board

UPDATE: Tree & Public Garden Commission Recommendation

The Tree & Public Garden Commission reviewed the application at their March 26, 2025, meeting. The T&PGC Decision and Record of Action regarding this application states:

- *Based upon the testimony presented, the Tree & Public Garden Commission finds it appropriate to approve the landscape application with the following conditions:*
 - *The site is to be irrigated.*
 - *The Virginia Creeper over the trellis be swapped out with a non-invasive Honeysuckle or climbing hydrangea.*

- *The proposed 3" caliper trees be watered regularly so that they may survive and thrive.*
- *Along Columbus Ave, the developer consult with City Arborist, Grant Archer, and Landscape Staff consultant, Walter Reins, to ensure the proper species of tree, currently designed as Honey Locust, is selected.*
- *Appropriate benches and landscape fixtures per the Mixed-Use Commercial Design guidelines and be brought back to the commission at a later time.*
- *Swap the Vinca Minor out with the Rhus Aromatica.*

The applicant agreed to the proposed findings and decision of the Board.

UPDATE: Board of Zoning and Planning - Previous Action

UPDATE: The Board of Zoning and Planning reviewed the application their January 23, 2025, meeting. The BZAP Decision and Record of Action regarding this application states:

- *Based upon the testimony presented, the Board of Zoning and Planning finds it appropriate to grant the conditional use permit per Bexley Code section 1254.09 to permit first floor residential use within a new multi-family building in a Mixed-Use Commercial District*

The applicant agreed to the proposed findings and decision of the Board.

- *Based upon the testimony presented, the Board of Zoning and Planning finds it appropriate to grant a variance from Bexley Code section 1254.17 to allow an accessory structure (pergola) in the side yard.*

The applicant agreed to the proposed findings and decision of the Board.

- *Based upon the testimony presented, the Board of Zoning and Planning finds it appropriate to grant a variance to waive the fence requirement per Bexley Code section 1264.05 with the following conditions:*
 - *City Staff approve final design details of the parking lot/ alley transition.*

The applicant agreed to the proposed findings and decision of the Board.

E. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Should the Board of Zoning and Planning choose to act on the certificate of appropriateness request, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. That the site modifications, design and materials will be in substantial conformance with the renderings and plans submitted at the March 27, 2025, Board of Zoning and Planning meeting unless otherwise modified in collaboration with the ARB and staff.