



TOWN OF COVENTRY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
STAFF REPORT

Dimensional Variance	
Owner:	David Hemming D/B/A Storage Five Coventry LLC
Applicant:	CT Sign
Address:	538 Main Street
Plat / Lot/ Zone:	AP 103 Lot 1.1 Zone I-1 (Industrial)
Existing Use:	Self-storage facility
Proposed Use:	Self-storage facility
Purpose of Application:	Applicant seeks a Dimensional Variance to install a second wall-mounted sign for a self-storage business where only one is allowed.

Background

This application comes before the Zoning Board of Review as a Dimensional Variance Application. The subject property is located at 538 Main Street, Coventry, RI and designated as AP 103, Lot 1.1.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to install a second wall-mounted sign for a self-storage facility where only one is allowed in an industrial zone. The applicant is seeking relief from the maximum number of wall-mounted signs.

Zoning

The zoning designation for the property is I-1 (Industrial). The applicable zoning code that relates to this proposal is Zoning Code § 255-1530, which states that “in industrial districts, except shopping centers [§ 1530A(2)], there may be one wall-mounted sign for each main building or use.”

Dimensional Variance Findings: Installing a second wall-mounted sign

Staff has conducted an orderly review of this Dimensional Variance application for consistency with the required standards set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-41, as follows (*state law in italics*):

1. *That the hardship from which the applicant seeks relief is due to the unique characteristics of the subject land or structure and not to the general characteristics*

of the surrounding area; and is not due to a physical or economic disability of the applicant, excepting those physical disabilities addressed in RIGL §45-24-30(a)(16);

FINDING: The applicant provided the following statements regarding the above hardship standard: The hardship results from the unique physical characteristics of this property and not from the general characteristics of the surrounding area. The subject property is an exceptionally large former manufacturing complex with a substantial building footprint and long roadway frontage. Main Street curves as it passes the site and the approved building sign 2 is completely invisible when driving with the property on your right hand side. Because of the scale, configuration and roadway geometry of this specific property, a single freestanding identification sign does not provide adequate identification of the facility from both approaches. The requested second wall sign is intended to identify the same Extra Space Storage facility and address this site-specific visibility condition.

2. *That the hardship is not the result of any prior action of the applicant;*

FINDING: The applicant provided the following statements regarding the above hardship standard: The hardship is not the result of any action taken by the applicant. The size and configuration of the former manufacturing property, the location of the building, the existing roadway alignment and the curve in Main Street all existed independently of the proposed signage. The requested variance is intended to respond to these pre-existing physical conditions and provide reasonable identification of the permitted self-storage use.

3. *That the granting of the requested variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance or the comprehensive plan upon which the ordinance is based;*

FINDING: The applicant provided the following statements regarding the above hardship standard: Granting the requested variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance. The proposed Sign Bis a professionally designed identification wall sign consistent with the Extra Space Storage signage approved for the property. It does not introduce an additional business, advertising message or unrelated use; it simply provides identification of the same facility from the opposite roadway approach. Given the unusually large scale of the property, the additional wall sign will remain proportionate to the site and will improve clear, orderly identification for motorists rather than create visual clutter.

4. *In granting a dimensional variance, that the hardship suffered by the owner of the subject property if the dimensional variance is not granted amounts to more than a mere inconvenience, meaning that relief sought is minimal to a reasonable enjoyment of the permitted use to which the property is proposed to be devoted. The fact that a*

use may be more profitable or that a structure may be more valuable after the relief is granted is not grounds for relief.

FINDING: The applicant provided the following statements regarding the above hardship standard: Without the requested dimensional variance, the property would experience more than a mere inconvenience because motorists approaching the facility from one direction would have substantially limited opportunity to identify the site before reaching it. Due to the curve in Main Street, the scale of the property and the separation between the roadway approaches, one freestanding identification sign cannot effectively serve both directions of travel. Wall Sign B represents the minimum additional relief necessary to provide reasonable identification of this permitted self-storage use. The request is not based upon increased profitability or property value, but upon the practical need to safely and effectively identify this unusually large property.

Staff Analysis

Without benefit of hearing any comments or discussion at the pending Zoning Board of Review meeting, staff currently have no concerns with the Dimensional Variance requests in general.