

CT INSIDER

Former Bristol Myers property in Wallingford dormant despite warehouse approval

Luther Turmelle, Staff writer

Jan. 3, 2024



A view of Bristol Myers Squibb's corporate campus on Research Parkway in Wallingford in early 2019. The former research and development facility was torn down later that year. A Massachusetts developer got approval in Dec. 2022 to build a warehouse on the site, but has yet to start construction on the facility.
Luther Turmelle/ Hearst Connecticut Media

It has been a year since the owner of the former Bristol Myers Squibb property on Research Parkway in Wallingford got approval for a 440,000 square foot warehouse and 10,000 square feet of office space, but it doesn't appear that construction of the facility is going to start anytime soon.

The only substantive action that has taken place since the December 2022 approval of the warehouse occurred earlier this month when the town's Planning and Zoning Commission approved a subdivision of the property. That subdivision turned what had previously been one parcel of just over 180 acres into two pieces of land, one of which is 5.65 acres while the other piece of property is 174 acres.

A Framingham, Mass.-based company, Calare Properties, owns both properties created by the subdivision.

The smaller of the two pieces of property is home to the former Bristol Myers day care center, which now sits vacant at 7 Research Parkway. The 20,320 square foot daycare facility is on the market for \$3.1 million and is being marketed by Cushman & Wakefield, according to the online real estate marketing web site LoopNet.

Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Jim Seichter, as well as Town Planner Kevin Pagini, said that officials with Calare have indicated they want to sell the day care center. But both men said Calare officials haven't divulged who they are building the warehouse for or indicated when the facility might be built. There are multiple warehouses along Research Parkway, which stretches from Wallingford into Meriden, including two operated by Amazon. The local road runs parallel to Interstate 91, which provides access to Interstate 84 via Interstate 691.

The day care center was built in 2000 and has a capacity for 150 children. Calare bought the former Bristol Myers corporate campus in February 2018 for \$5 million and much of the campus has been demolished, including a 915,000 square foot building that served as the main facility.

The pharmaceutical giant announced in June 2015 that it would close its 982,000-square-foot research, doing so three years later. Since Calare bought the property, it has tried three times to get redevelopment plans for the property approved, with two failed efforts preceding the PZC's approval of the warehouse a year ago.

Plans approved by the PZC in December 2022 for the warehouse include 105 loading docks, 96 tractor-trailer parking spaces and 530 regular parking spaces.

William Manley, Calare's chief executive and chief investment officer, did not return several requests for comment regarding who the warehouse is being built for and when construction might start.

John Boyd, whose Florida-based company evaluates locations for corporations, said the Bristol Myers property remaining undeveloped is evidence of a slowing in the logistics sector. Some of the slowdown, according to Boyd, has to do with current economic conditions.

"Some of it is an overall weakening of the U.S. economy, and some of it is due to high interest rates and inflation," he said.

But an equally significant factor, according to Boyd, is "the enormous community backlash" to mammoth distribution centers, Boyd said.

"New Jersey has become the poster child for this kind of opposition," he said. Boyd said the state and several communities have spent public money to acquire land that appeared to be attractive to warehouse developers in communities across central New Jersey and in rural Warren County.