

## **Appendix B**

### Correspondence

This Appendix documents some key communications with stakeholders in the Mill Plaza Study Committee process, including Mill Plaza owner John Pinto, neighbors of the Plaza, the University of New Hampshire, the Durham Town Council, Planning Board and Library Board of Trustees.



# **Colonial Durham Associates**

Administrative Offices

405 Park Avenue, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10022  
Tel 212-644-0311 ■ 212-644-0309 Fax 212-644-0320

RECEIVED

2006

ADMIN. OFFICE  
TOWN OF DURHAM

September 13, 2006

Mr. Todd I. Selig  
Town of Durham  
15 Newmarket Road  
Durham, NH 03824

Dear Todd,

It was very good to have our meeting and subsequent conversation relating to the future growth of lovely Durham, New Hampshire.

Upon reflection, Todd, it appears that the best course of action would be for the Town to continue to develop its vision for the future. In that regard, it is important for your office and others in the Town to develop the plans and specifications for the proposed Town Center. I look forward to working with the Town as it advances upon the vision for both an improved tax base and better symmetry between the Town, the University and our property. In this regard, I would look to the Town to develop the design specifications so that we may then determine how best to participate to achieve the implementation of the vision of the Town leadership.

I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

John H. Pinto



TOWN OF DURHAM  
15 NEWMARKET ROAD  
DURHAM, NH 03824-2898  
Tel: 603/868-5571  
Fax: 603/868-5572

John Pinto  
Colonial Durham Associates  
405 Park Avenue, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
March 19, 2007

Dear John,

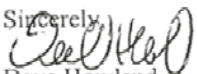
On behalf of the Mill Plaza Study Committee, I want to extend our greetings and bring you up to speed on the exciting start of our work. All of us around the committee table and many fellow residents we run into around town and at the Mill Plaza are excited about the potential for improving this vital part of our university community.

Briefly, here are some highlights of what we have underway:

- ✓ We have set a brisk schedule, which I have enclosed, that will take us through four stages: 1) creating a vision statement for the project, 2) developing conceptual designs based on that vision, 3) researching the potential economic, social and environmental impacts of the design concepts produced, and then 4) narrowing and solidifying final recommendations and authoring the report. This approach and the format of our bi-weekly meetings puts a premium on public participation.
- ✓ We have recruited a team of talented architects who live and work in our community to work closely with us through this process.
- ✓ We have begun conducting a set of creative exercises to help us best understand our hopes – and the community's hopes – for the site, and the site's potential development under our town's current zoning laws. We plan to soon hold a public hearing to help us round out our project vision statement.
- ✓ We are setting up a Web page on the town site for committee documents and public input.

Finally, as you by now have probably heard, we recently learned that the Plaza site has made the short list for a grant of technical support from the American Institute of Architects that could help us carry forward a community-created vision for the Plaza. I have attached a March 12 letter from the AIA about this. We have scheduled a meeting in Durham with their representatives on Tuesday morning, March 27 to discuss the potential of working with the AIA. I am looking forward meeting Edgar then and sharing with him our ideas and our optimism.

Meanwhile, John, please know that you are always welcome at our table and we encourage your input. I will do my best to keep you informed of our progress. We are genuinely excited about the prospects, and I look forward to communicating with you in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,  
  
Dave Howland  
Chairman, Mill Plaza Study Committee  
(603) 868-8975 [Dave.Howland@unh.edu](mailto:Dave.Howland@unh.edu)

Cc. Todd Selig  
Edgar Ramos



TOWN OF DURHAM  
15 NEWMARKET ROAD  
DURHAM, NH 03824-2898  
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March 28, 2007

Dear property owner,

This letter is to inform you about an exciting development in your neighborhood. The Durham Town Council has established a citizen committee to develop, with the public's help, a conceptual vision for redeveloping the nine-acre Mill Plaza property. Formed with encouragement from the Mill Plaza's owner, John Pinto, the committee includes local business owners, neighborhood residents, landlords, the University of New Hampshire and representatives of the town's Library Board, Historic District Commission, Planning Board, and Town Council.

Among other things, the committee is charged by the Council to explore the feasibility of establishing on the site a new library, town hall, park, and combination of shops, offices and apartments. The wider goal is to create a positive community gathering space for local citizens, UNH students, staff and faculty – and Durham's many visitors. We hope that this space will enhance the attractiveness and value of our downtown.

We invite you to join us in this undertaking. An initial public hearing to discuss a vision for the property is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 4**, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., in Theater I at the Memorial Union Building on the UNH campus. In addition, our committee meets regularly on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Town Hall. Finally, we have set up an e-mail address for public comments:

[PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us](mailto:PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us)

We hope you will participate in our work and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dave Howland  
Chair, Mill Plaza Study Committee





TOWN OF DURHAM  
15 NEWMARKET ROAD  
DURHAM, NH 03824-2898  
Tel: 603/868-5571  
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April 6, 2007

John Pinto  
Colonial Durham Associates  
405 Park Avenue, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
April 6, 2007

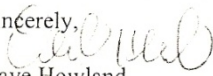
Dear John,

I have some good news to report to you in this letter, our second, to keep you informed about our work engaging the public in a discussion about redeveloping the Mill Plaza property. First, let me say that it was a pleasure meeting Edgar, introducing him to residents and community leaders here, and sharing our hopes and optimism with him. Here is the latest:

- ✓ We have won the American Institute of Architects statewide AIA 150 competition. I believe that your support, underscored by Edgar's visit, and our community's early enthusiasm for the project played a significant role in winning this award. I think it holds much promise. With its national reputation and wide ranging expertise, the AIA is poised to provide a range of assistance to promote a successful redevelopment project – from assessing the site and facilitating public discussion, to shepherding the project through the planning and approval process.
- ✓ Despite a snowstorm that knocked out power to much of Durham, more than 75 people – not including our committee and town staff – attended our first public hearing on Wednesday at UNH. The audience, which included many neighbors of the Plaza, was quite positive about our efforts. Several speakers said they were grateful for the opportunity to dream about what might be on the property. We recorded the session and plan to broadcast it on our local community access television channel. Attached is a two-sided handout we distributed at the hearing including our Committee's working draft vision statement.
- ✓ In addition to the public hearing, we have begun receiving letters and e-mails from the public with many constructive and imaginative ideas.

In sum, we have a good deal of momentum and positive energy. We are looking forward to meeting soon with AIA representatives to chart our collaboration. It is likely that with significant additional assistance we will modify our original work schedule to more thoroughly explore the possibilities for the site and to more deeply secure public participation and support. We will let you know of any changes in our schedule when we have a clearer idea of what this award means for our process. Perhaps not long thereafter we can check in with you, John, to have a conversation about how this is all going, to ask for your input, and to plan for the longer collaboration ahead. Meanwhile, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you again for supporting the dynamic public conversation we have begun here in Durham.

Sincerely,

  
Dave Howland  
Chairman, Mill Plaza Study Committee  
(603) 868-8975 [Dave.Howland@unh.edu](mailto:Dave.Howland@unh.edu)

Cc. Todd Selig  
Edgar Ramos

Dave Howland  
5 Chesley Drive  
Durham, NH 03824

June 10, 2007

Dear Council members,

Attached is a work plan created with our AIA150 partners, and adopted on June 6 by the Mill Plaza Study Committee, to guide the development of our recommendations for redeveloping the Mill Plaza property. I look forward with Patricia Sherman, Co-Chair of AIA150, to presenting this to you, answering any questions you might have, and hearing your suggestions.

The work plan breaks down into four stages, each with its own written products and each capped by at least one large weekend or evening public forum. Now that we have a collaborative plan and a timetable, our hope is to actively involve as many key stakeholders in this process as practically possible (especially John Pinto, who encouraged us to undertake this project) to help ensure its success.

The stages of our work plan include:

1. An intensive information-gathering process for a data report to provide a reference and framework for the design process ahead. This is already underway.
2. A creative, interactive design process with three teams, including a Durham team led by architect Bill Schoonmaker. This stage features two public forums to react to and help shape their concept plans.
3. A process to merge the best elements of the resulting concept plans. The three teams will play a central role with the committee in creating a final "hybrid" design.
4. The production of our final report and recommendations.

Also attached is a set of guidelines adopted by the Committee to clarify our collaboration with AIA150 and make the most of our work together. Taken together with the Committee's Vision Statement presented to you in May, I believe we have a solid foundation for the work ahead.

Sincerely,



*Signed & Sent*

Dave Howland, Chair, Mill Plaza Study Committee

Dave Howland  
5 Chesley Drive  
Durham, NH 03824

June 21, 2007

Dear Planning Board members,

Thank you very much for inviting us to update you on the work of the Mill Plaza Study Committee and our partners with the New Hampshire American Institute of Architects' AIA150 program. Patricia Sherman, co-chair of AIA150, and I are eager to share with you our newly minted work plan, which sets the goal of producing by year's end for the Town Council conceptual plans and recommendations for the redevelopment of the Mill Plaza property. The AIA150 team – which includes Plan NH, The Jordan Institute, Granite State Landscape Architects and the Preservation Alliance – intends to follow the project through the design and approval process to construction.

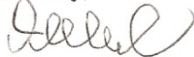
In a nutshell, the stages of our work plan include:

1. An intensive information-gathering process for a data report to provide a reference and framework for the design process ahead. This is already underway.
2. A creative, interactive design process with three teams, including a Durham team led by architect Bill Schoonmaker. This stage features two public forums to react to and help shape their concept plans.
3. A process to merge the best elements of the resulting concept plans. The three teams will play a central role with the committee in creating a final "hybrid" design.
4. The production of our final report and recommendations.

We have designed this to be a truly collaborative process that draws on the ideas and wisdom of our residents, property owners, professionals, and members of our many volunteer boards and committees. In particular, we believe your early involvement and feedback – both formally and informally – will go a long way to ensuring the ultimate success of this effort as it moves from planning to reality.

In addition to the work plan, I have attached, FYI, two other important documents guiding our work that we can refer to during our discussion: The Mill Plaza Study Committee Vision Statement and AIA's 10 Principles on Livable Communities. We know you have a full plate of work and so thank you again for your time. I look forward to our conversation.

Sincerely,



*Signed & sent*

Dave Howland, Chair Mill Plaza Study Committee



*Neighbors, please mark your calendars*

## **Meetings ahead for your input on the Mill Plaza property redevelopment**

*From Dave Howland, Tom Newkirk and Deborah Hirsch-Mayer – July 3, 2007*

Dear Neighbors,

As many of you might already know, the Town of Durham is studying the possibility of redeveloping the Mill Plaza property to include new buildings for shops, offices, housing, a new library and maybe a town hall. Tom, Deborah and I are representing you – the neighbors of the Plaza – on the Mill Plaza Study Committee and we are writing to encourage your participation in one or more of the following meetings ahead this month to inform you about the process and to listen to your concerns. Each has a different focus:

**For the General Public** on *Wednesday, July 18, 7 p.m.-10 p.m. at MUB Theater II on the UNH campus* – The public is invited to learn about and comment on the formal site analysis that is underway and that will guide the work of three design teams working through December. If you can attend only one meeting, we suggest you come to this one.

**For Faculty Neighborhood Residents** on *Tuesday, July 17 at 7 p.m. at the Town Council Chambers* – This is a meeting for all neighbors of the Plaza, including residents of the Church Hill Apartments, to learn about the project and to share their suggestions, ideas and concerns.

**For Conservation/ College Brook Enthusiasts** on *Monday July 16 at 2 p.m. at the Town Council Chambers* – A focus group, including ecologists and other natural resource professionals, has been organized for those concerned with potential environmental impacts of the project, especially on College Brook and its wooded buffer.

**A little more background:** The Mill Plaza Study Committee, with the property owner's encouragement, is working with the public and a team of architects, engineers and planning experts with the New Hampshire chapter of the American Institute of Architects to draft conceptual plans and recommendations for the Town Council by December. Durham won the pro-bono services of the AIA in a statewide competition to celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. With the AIA 150 team – which includes Plan NH, The Jordan Institute, Granite State Landscape Architects and the Preservation Alliance – we are beginning a comprehensive community-wide design and consensus building process which has as its ambitious goal a permitted redevelopment project slated for construction by 2009. The result of this work by year's end is likely to be much more than drawings on paper and a wish list, but instead a plan for reshaping for the better this vital section of our downtown and the way it meshes with our neighborhood.

In our neighborhood, we know that issues of vehicular access, the state of College Brook and the integrity of its wooded buffer have a long history. To better represent you, we want to hear from you and to encourage you as stakeholders to become involved in the process underway. In addition to regular public committee meetings at Town Hall (usually first and third Wednesdays at 4:30), we are hosting with our AIA partners a series of large evening public meetings in the coming months to discuss the project and evaluate plans as they are produced. We had a good turnout at our first public hearing on April 4 at the MUB and are hoping for another on July 18. We encourage you to send your suggestions/concerns to the committee at our e-mail address at [PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us](mailto:PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us) and to visit our homepage on the town Web site for future meeting times.

Sincerely,

*Signe B. Sent*

Dave Howland,  
5 Chesley Drive

Deborah Hirsch-Mayer,  
19 Garden Lane

Tom Newkirk,  
40 Mill Pond Road





UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE

November 28, 2007

Dave Howland  
Chair, Mill Plaza Study Committee  
5 Chesley Drive  
Durham, NH 03824

Dear Dave,

Thank you for representing the Mill Plaza Committee and sharing your enthusiasm and insights at the Community Breakfast earlier this month. It is obvious that you have a true understanding of the potential and the possibilities this unique project has, and how important open communication and community involvement are. As a resident of the town, a member of the UNH community and an abutter to the Mill Plaza property, you are well qualified to lead this venture, and we were fortunate to learn more about your perspective.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your work with us all.

Best regards,

Mark W. Huddleston  
President

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Thompson Hall 105 Main Street Durham, New Hampshire 03824 Phone: 603-862-2450 Fax: 603-862-3060

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Library Board of Trustees, MPSC-AIANH150 Design Teams, and Town Council  
FROM: Mill Plaza Study Committee  
DATE: January 17, 2008  
RE: Library Site/ Roadway Proposal

At our January 16, 2008 meeting we discussed the outline of a proposal for initiating the redevelopment of the Mill Plaza with the building of a new Town library. We voted unanimously to recommend that the Library Board of Trustees, our design teams, and the Town Council consider this idea in more detail over the next few months. Please note that we put forward this idea contingent on how and if such a “Phase I” proposal is integrated into and compatible with our final recommendations for the entire site (expected Spring 2008).

Features of the idea are as follows.

- A publicly-owned site for a new Town library at the southeast corner of the property would be developed as Phase I of the redevelopment. This would provide the creation of a vibrant new public space for our community and our children in the near term. This would also serve as a community-oriented catalyst for future development of the site. This location would allow for green space around the library and a permanent non-motorized buffer between the Mill Plaza and the Faculty Neighborhood (i.e., the library footprint would preclude motor vehicle traffic between the Plaza and Chesley Drive).
- A publicly-owned roadway, including a path for pedestrians and bicycles, would be constructed leading to the library site along College Brook from the current Mill Road entrance. The construction of this “library parkway” would allow for placement of new subsurface utilities for the library and for future development. A two-story library at the end of the road would provide a much needed visual anchor and draw visitors to the back of the Plaza site. As considered in our various designs for the entire site, this road would eventually join with a future motor vehicle entrance from Main Street (the Committee is still considering where and how that important connection should best be placed).
- The area along College Brook, including the two “land-locked” vacant parcels across the Brook, would serve as an enhanced naturalized area that would provide multiple functions: open and green space, flood storage, water quality filtration, wildlife habitat, public non-motorized access, and a buffer for the residential neighborhoods adjacent to the site. This could be secured by deed restrictions (or other legal instruments) on future development.
- The remainder of the Mill Plaza site would become an attractive, accessible “village center” of developable land presenting a range of future possibilities that the MPSC and the design teams are considering and will present to the property owner and Town Council in the coming months. In short, Phase I would allow for a new Town library

soon, catalyze future redevelopment, buffer residential neighborhoods, enhance College Brook, and not preclude a number of design choices yet to be made for the rest of the site.

Of course, there are numerous details and issues that all parties will have to consider. Such a Phase I approach should ensure significant financial and other benefits for the Town's citizens as compared to any costs that may be imposed. In the intermediate term, before the rest of the site is redeveloped, issues concerning the new road and the current parking lot, such as access and snow removal, will have to be addressed. Numerous issues such as grade, drainage, stormwater management, and so forth, will have to be addressed in detail. Lastly, as noted before, such an approach has to be part and parcel of the longer-term, larger vision for the entire site.

We look forward to your consideration.





TOWN OF DURHAM  
15 NEWMARKET ROAD  
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December 7, 2007

Mr. John Pinto  
Sintra Capital Corporation  
405 Park Ave, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10022

Dear John:

Earlier this week, Durham's Mill Plaza Study Committee met with all three NHAIA150 design teams to review the criteria for their final round of designs for a redeveloped Mill Plaza property. With the help of these teams, the Committee deepened its consensus on what Durham would like to see there.

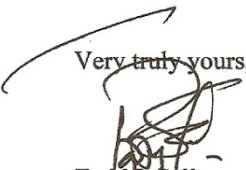
As we now approach this final design effort, which has all three teams co-operating to create two final hybrid schemes that incorporate the ideas of many stakeholders, we believe your input would be very beneficial at this juncture. To that end, we would like to invite you to review privately the progress of the hybrid designs in early February 2008, so your perspective can be incorporated into the design product before it is then finalized and offered to the community in a public presentation later that month. We hope that you will be able to set aside a specific time to meet with us in Durham to accomplish this review process.

The NHAIA and the Mill Plaza Committee also need to complete their work and plan the format for their final product. With your input at this crucial stage we will have the best chance of aligning Durham's hopes and expectations with your own. The closer these are the more likely we will all succeed.

Although we understand the pressures of the Holiday season and your travel schedule, we hope you will consider meeting with us in early February. Representatives from the Committee are prepared to visit you in New York if that would work better with your schedule. If neither is a viable option for you, could you please suggest a more effective way to share your goals for the site so the final design product is the best that it can be for both you and Durham?

Thank you again for your support and patience with this unique process. All of us here wish you the very best for the Holidays and for the new year ahead.

Very truly yours,



Todd I. Selig  
Town Administrator



TOWN OF DURHAM  
15 NEWMARKET ROAD  
DURHAM, NH 03824-2898  
Tel: 603/868-5571  
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February 14, 2008

Mr. John Pinto  
President  
Sintra Capital Corporation  
405 Park Avenue, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10022

Re: **Final Hybrid Design for the Mill Plaza Site  
Durham, New Hampshire**

Dear Mr. Pinto:

The final hybrid design for the Mill Plaza is now in progress. As I believe you are aware from minutes and other information that has been forwarded to you and Edgar Ramos from the Mill Plaza Study Committee, there is an interest in exploring with you the idea of the Town constructing the first leg of a road through the site in consideration for about a ¼ acre parcel in the southeast corner of the Mill Plaza property for placement of a new Durham Library.

The benefits to you from this concept include:

- reduction in first costs, which include road design and construction including the installation of underground utilities;
- less future road maintenance;
- freedom from neighborhood buffering issues as well as brook conservation concerns;
- from the site development perspective, agreement from all of the design teams that the location of this portion of the road which starts about at the present entry on Mill Road and follows approximately along the existing edge of the parking lot is the correct location for this section of the access infrastructure;
- the guarantee that the Library will locate in the Mill Plaza which will act as an anchor for site usage.

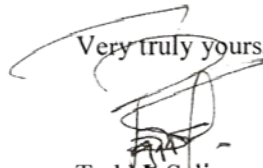
The design teams are now working together to produce a hybrid design that will include the Library site in the plan that you will see when you return to Durham on February 22, 2008. They will also be considering the relocation of the Durham Marketplace in order to create the best possible design and synergy for the property.

Final Hybrid Design for the Mill Plaza Site  
Durham, New Hampshire  
February 14, 2008  
Page 2

When you meet with representatives from the Mill Plaza Study Committee and the AIA 150 next week, you will have the opportunity to provide feedback relative to the concepts presented. Your views relative to these will be integral in helping to shape the final hybrid that is developed for presentation to the public in late-March. Because the AIA 150 team members are anxious to conclude their efforts in Durham and the Durham Library Board of Trustees is desirous of identifying a definitive future library site in the community, the hybrid needs to proceed in the next few weeks with the best possible information so that we can bring closure to the current process that has been put into motion. It is the hope of the Mill Plaza Committee and the AIA 150 group that you will provide as much guidance as possible as to your goals for the Mill Plaza site during your visit or shortly thereafter. Without your input, the process will produce only that which you originally suggested many months ago -- establishing the Town of Durham's vision for the property. It is the sincere desire of the Mill Plaza Committee and the AIA 150 team that the end result will transcend this to also incorporate your aspirations for the parcel.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have further questions in regard to this or any other matter. I look forward talking with you further on February 22nd.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd F. Selig", written over a horizontal line.

Todd F. Selig  
Administrator

cc: Mill Plaza Committee