

March 4, 2020

Mr. Rick Taintor, Contract Planner
Planning Board
8 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824

*RE: Continued Public Hearing - **Mill Plaza Redevelopment**. 7 Mill Road. Continued review of formal application for: 1) Site plan and 2) Conditional Use for mixed use redevelopment project and activity within the wetland and shoreland overlay districts. A revised general layout has been submitted for review. Colonial Durham Associates, property owner. Sean McCauley, agent. Joe Persechino, Tighe & Bond, engineer. Ari Pollack, attorney. (Rick Taintor is serving as the Town's Contract Planner.) Central Business District. Map 5, Lot 1-1.*

Dear Rick,

As I have observed to you a few times over the past few years, Colonial Durham Associates has been slow to provide information that would help us all to visualize what is being proposed. While I am glad to see that a larger context or locus plan has finally been provided in the January 2, 2020 submission, I hope that you and the Planning Board will request additional information from the applicant, as follows:

1) an overlay of the proposed site plan over existing conditions plan

What will be different from what we see now?

Note that Doucet Survey provided a base 2008 existing conditions plan. I do not see it posted online but would be happy to email a PDF of that document. If changes onsite have occurred since then, the existing conditions plan should be updated and provided to the Board. (Certainly given today's computer drafting technology, this could be done; otherwise, bring back "overheads" and transparencies.) The overlay should show topographical indicators, specifically how slopes will be altered.

2) scale drawing showing surrounding buildings labeled with their heights, or, put another way, to-scale rendered elevations of structures on abutting properties

It appears to me that given our unfortunate experience with the Orion student housing development relative to building heights and Historic District structures on Church Hill, and despite the somewhat vague language of the Architectural Regulations, dated September 9, 2015, the following should be requested of the applicant:

E) Process | 1) Materials. As appropriate, applicants shall submit the following:

a) Precise elevation drawings drawn to scale of each impacted façade visible under the provisions of D) 5

3) a **physical 3-D scale model** of the proposed project that shows the excavation required onsite, but preferably one that includes an imagined scenario for a parking lot on the adjacent Church Hill property (that requires excavation on that parcel).

In my letter to the Planning Board, dated October 28, 2016, I requested CDA provide a:

Scale model: This is a large project. If and when a formal application is submitted, it would be good to have at that time a 3-D physical scale model of the proposed site plan (elevations?), showing both people onsite and the surrounding buildings (along Church Hill, for example) to allow the community to visualize what might be developed—and to confirm that the buildings adhere to the architectural standards portion of the site plan.

Digital 2D renderings provide one view, but a 3D physical model—particularly with human figures—is also valuable. Given the massive proposed structural and topographical changes, we can all use all the help we can get. (Think RiverWoods: Did anyone really visualize clearly what we would wind up with?) Again, a 3D model should show how the terrain/topography will be altered.

4) **one set of elevations (renderings?) without landscaping**

We need to see the face without the makeup. And many of the trees shown on the renderings submitted to date add to the illusion that we will all be alive when the trees mature, i.e., reach the size shown on the illustrations.

5) an **existing landscaping plan** that shows existing natural features, healthy mature trees, and other vegetation **that could be retained**; at the least, photographs clearly showing existing mature trees with indicators for which will be retained and which will be removed.

Finally, I would remind everyone of the words of former Town Councilor Jay Gooze regarding Madbury Commons (not verbatim), “We do not always seem to get what we believed we would get, based on what were shown or told at the Planning Board. For example, there IS no room along the Madbury Road sidewalk for café tables.”

Sincerely yours,