



August 30, 2018

Project Narrative

648-654 Main Street
Winchester, MA 01890

Purpose and Intent

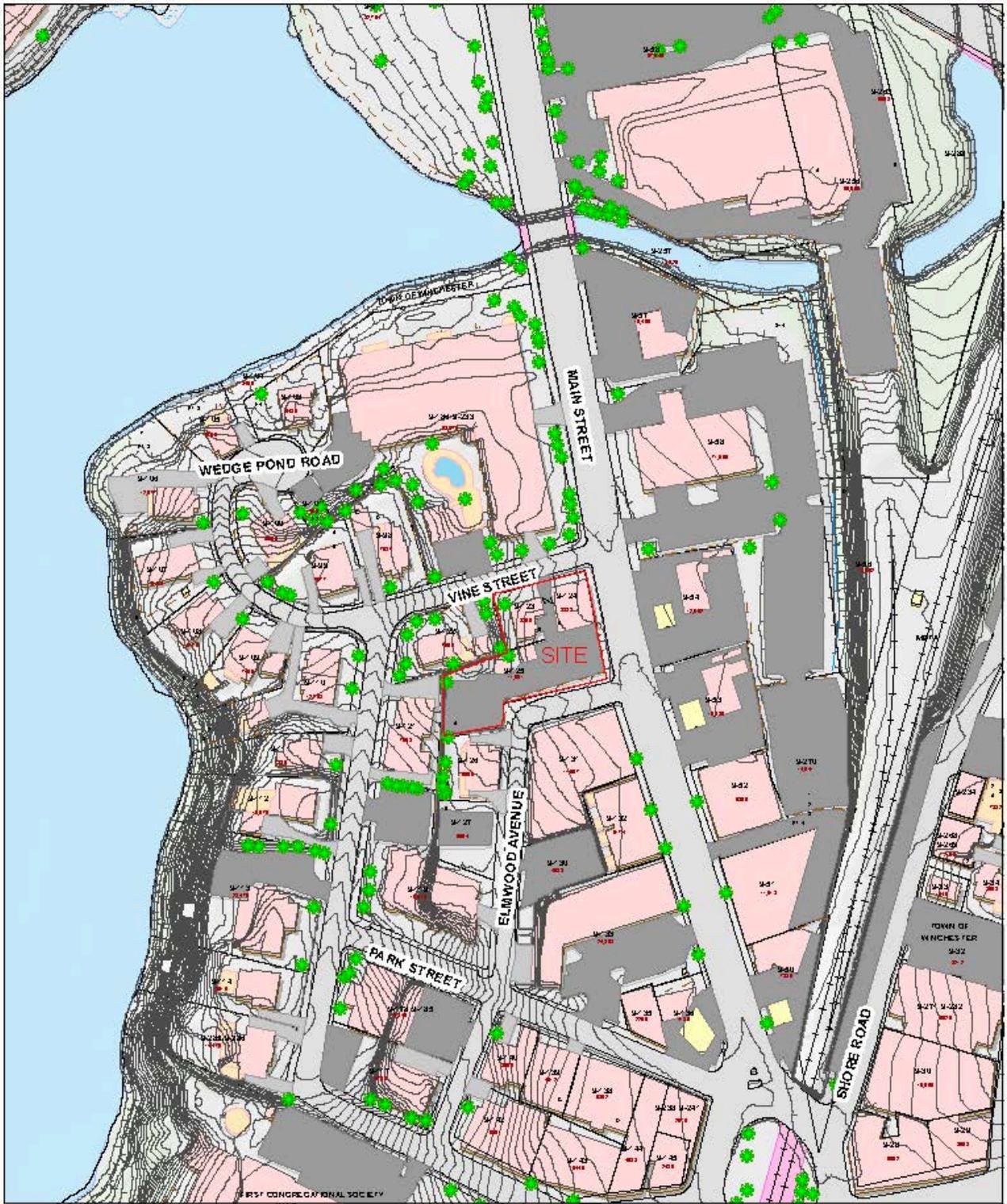
The purpose of this development is to provide a new home for the Fells Hardware store on its current site while adding 32 quality residential units to the town center with appropriate parking and open space. The intent is to produce a new building consistent with the look and feel of downtown Winchester and to meet the new standards contained in Section 7.3 of the Zoning By-Law and the Guidelines for New Construction, Chapter Three of the Planning Board Regulations Governing the Center Business District of the Town of Winchester.



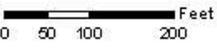
Existing Conditions

The subject property is an L shaped lot on the west side of Main Street bounded by Main Street, Vine Street, and Elmwood Avenue. About half of the Main Street frontage is occupied by a one story retail building occupied by Fells Hardware. The Vine Street frontage has an existing driveway and a two story wood framed house, 63 Vine Street, currently used by Fells for storage. While outside the Winchester Center National Register District Boundary, this structure is shown as an historic resource on Map 7.3.4.





Locus Plan 654 Main Street



This lot forms the northwest corner of the CBD and the North Core sub-district. It is abutted on the west by two residential lots located outside the CBD zone. The ground level of these lots is well above that of the subject lot. They are occupied by 2 ½ and 3 ½ story residential buildings, one a single family and the other a multifamily. The southerly side of the subject property abuts a vacant lot within the CBD which has been approved for 14 residential units and the related parking.

After review, the Winchester Building Department has classified the four lot bounds facing the three adjoining streets as front yards and the balance of the property bounds as side yards. This is consistent with the Winchester Zoning By-Law treatment of more typical corner lots.

The rear portion of the lot has a large rubble stone retaining wall rising from grade to 13.70 feet above the lot surface. It appears that this portion of the site was excavated at some point in the past, to remove quality sandy material for use elsewhere and to level this site. Most of the lot surface is now paved, with storage sheds and containers located on grade behind the existing structures. The lot surface slopes about 7.5 feet from west to east with the low point at the northeast corner, the Main St. /Vine St. intersection.



A small area of the easterly portion of the property is located in the flood plain of the Aberjona River. The base flood elevation is 23.60 feet (NAVD Base) in this area. The Winchester Engineering Department requires that the proponent provide compensatory flood storage equal to the present flood storage volume on the site. This requirement is a key driver in the programming and design.

Phasing Plan

The project will be constructed in a single phase beginning as rapidly as possible after project approvals and permitting.

Planned Uses

The proposed structure is a combination of residential, parking, and retail uses. The five story structure will have a residential lobby, the Fells Hardware retail store, and 22 garage parking spaces at grade level. A portion of the garage will be used for flood water storage in the event of a flood emergency. The retail area will be at the sidewalk elevation and designed to withstand flooding to above the base flood elevation.

The second level will have nine residential units, with useable open space towards the rear. The third and fourth floors will have nine residential units each. The partial fifth floor will house five residential units and provide access to a shared roof deck.

A partial basement will house mechanical systems for the structure as well as storage for the retail store. The basement will be built watertight as it will be below the base flood elevation.

The rear of the site will be developed as a pocket park for use by the public and residential unit owners. By filling in the previously excavated portion of the site, useable open space will be created at close to the original grade of the rear area. The existing retaining walls at the rear of the property will be buried for most of their height. The outdoor areas will be accessible from the second level of the building and by way of a new exterior stair from Elmwood Avenue. This outdoor space will be enhanced with trees, grade plantings, pavers and a trellis.



SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1" = 40' 0"

Building Design

The proposed structure is L shaped in plan, following the geometry of the site. The main wing, parallel to Main Street, is five stories in height, reinforcing the street wall and visual corridor on Main Street. The rear portion, closer to the existing residential fabric, is reduced in scale to four stories with one full story below grade at the rear.

Brick masonry with cast stone accents and lintels is carried to the fourth floor level on the street frontages, mirroring the existing masonry heights on the west side of Main Street. The rear wing, facing the adjacent residential uses, is clad in traditional lap siding with corner boards and horizontal trim bands. The lap siding carries around to all the street frontages on the fourth level. The partial fifth floor is clad with a metal mansard roof punctuated with gabled dormers.

The residential lobby and core are marked by a masonry tower form capped by a projected cornice. The Main/Vine corner, the most prominent portion of the site when viewed from the north, is marked by a masonry tower element capped with a shallow pitched roof. Smaller, curved top masonry bays mark the residential living rooms and break down the scale of the Main Street façade. Rectangular, flat topped bays mark the living rooms and break down the length of the rear wing and west elevation.

Traditional double hung windows are used as single units and in pairs at kitchens and bedrooms. Living rooms are lit with larger double hung windows, large multi paned fixed windows, and French Doors with transoms opening to shallow balconies. Fixed panels between window lines are used to integrate the openings on various floors and add visual interest to the façade.

The retail frontages on Main Street and Elmwood Avenue are glazed with full height fixed storefront glazing systems, broken down in scale with vertical and horizontal mullions. Garage areas are glazed with minimal fixed windows to shield these areas from view. The retail frontages are protected by retractable canvas awnings and marked with signage integrated into the cast stone trim bands.

The residential lobby is located on Elmwood Avenue facing Main Street, easily visible from Main and connected to the existing sidewalk by a new nine foot wide walkway along Elmwood Avenue. The residential entrance is marked by a fixed canopy with illuminated house number signage.

At the fifth floor, a portion of the roof above the four story rear wing is used as a shared outdoor space for the unit owners. This deck has a protective guard rail set

well back from the roof edge and is protected by a shading trellis. Planters and outdoor furniture enhance this amenity.

The Building Development Program is appended to this document.

Traffic and Parking

Access to the site parking areas will be provided by way of a driveway and curb cut on Vine Street, replacing an existing access drive in the same area. The new curb cut will be slightly west of the existing one, opposite the existing driveway serving 666 Main Street, the existing residential condominium across Vine Street from the site. This location will minimize the visual impact of the driveway and reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts.

The expectation is that most of the entering traffic will approach on Main Street, turn into Vine Street, and reach the site driveway within 85 feet of the corner. We expect most of the traffic leaving the site will turn right out of the driveway and reach the stop sign controlled intersection at Vine and Main. From there, cars will enter either the north bound or southbound Main Street traffic.

A total of twenty nine parking spaces will be provided on site, all of them allocated for the residential use. This is near the minimum requirement of the Zoning By-Law. As there are fewer spaces than units, the parking spaces will be sold separately from the residential units.

The seven on grade parking spaces will be screened with shrubs and fencing. Two garage doors will provide access to the parking areas within the building. Garage access will be controlled for one way ingress and egress by way of flashing lights.

The street parking on Main Street will continue to meet the retail customer parking requirement. This solution has successfully served the Fells Hardware clientele for many years. Since the proposed retail space is smaller than the existing retail use, no new parking is required or provided for the retail component.

Historic Preservation and Conservation



The Vine Street parcel has an existing two story home, 63 Vine Street, which is currently used for storage by Fells Hardware. While outside the downtown historic district, this structure is listed as an historic resource on Map 7.3.4 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law.

According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission Form B, this house dates from prior to 1854 and was originally located to the east, facing Main Street. It was moved in 1927 and turned to face Vine Street. Over the years it has been substantially altered, with a new concrete block foundation, aluminum siding, front stoop, aluminum trim, asphalt shingle roof, and replacement windows. Quoting the Form B author, “It is unclear if the home was originally designed without greater ornament or if the current modest aesthetic is the result of alterations”

This structure has not been used as a residence for several decades and has not been maintained to residential standards during that period. It is currently in poor condition.



While demolition of structures considered historically significant is strongly discouraged by the Zoning By-Law, the applicant plans to demolish this structure in order to make room for the proposed structure and uses. In its letter of April 3, 2018, the Winchester Historic Commission waived any demolition delay requirements for this structure.

Housing Plan

The project contains a mix of one and two bedroom flats with one and a half or two and one half baths, depending on the unit size. The units range in size from 815 SF to 1172 SF, as summarized in the attached Unit Description table. The selling price of the units has not been set and will be determined by the final construction costs and market conditions at the time of sale. Selling prices will be competitive with other quality units in desirable downtown locations. As mentioned previously, parking spaces will be marketed independent of the units, keeping the unit selling prices as low as possible.

In accordance with Section 7.3.19, three residential units, 10 percent of the total, will be affordable according to 760 CMR 56 and two units, 5 percent of the total, will be affordable to middle income applicants. The selling price of these units will be determined using the formulae given in 760 CMR 56 and the Zoning By-Law. The exterior appearance of the affordable units will be identical to that of the market rate units. The interior finishes and fixtures will be comparable, but may not be identical to those of the market rate units. All units will be built to the Group 1 standards of 521 CMR, The Regulations of the Architectural Access Board. As such, they will be suitable for owners aging in place and convertible to Group 2 accessible units without structural change.

Zoning Approvals Required

The proposed mixed use is permitted as of right in the North Core sub-zone in accordance with Table 7.3.11.3, Group IV Commercial, Mixed Use.

The proposed height, 56.18 feet above the average grade on each side of the building, requires a Special Permit in the North Core Zone in accordance with the Heights Map at 7.3.2 and Section 7.3.12.3.1. This height is within the 65 feet allowed by Special Permit.

The proposed FAR, 2.48810, requires a Special Permit in accordance with Section 7.3.12.3.2. This FAR is within the FAR 2.5 allowed by Special Permit

The minimum side yard setback is zero in the North Core sub-district. The proposed side setbacks of 3.4, 40.21, and 16.1 feet exceed this requirement.

The rear setback requirement is not applicable as the Building Department has determined that this lot has no rear yards.

The proposed design has 7049 SF of total open space, 37.68 % of the lot area. About half of the total is pervious. The twenty nine parking spaces in the proposed plan, .91 space per dwelling unit, meet the requirements of Section 7.3.20.2. Parking for the commercial space is not required per 7.3.20.2, Footnote 3.

The Winchester Zoning By-Law contains a conflict between the definition of a parking space and the minimum dimensional requirements for each space. The project has been designed using the 9 ft. by 19 ft. angle parking space standard and the 9 ft. by 22 ft. parallel parking space standard found in Section 5.1.6 of the By-Law. These spaces do not meet the 200 SF reference found in the parking space definition at Section 10, to the extent applicable. Relief is sought from the 200 SF requirement.

Bicycle parking for eight bicycles is provided for residents and visitors within the garage.

Since the lot exceeds 10,000 SF, site plan review is required per Section 7.3.15.1.1

Since a Special Permit is required, design review is also required per Section 7.3.15.1.

Planning Objectives

This project supports the planning goal of adding residential units to the downtown. Thirty two new units, including five affordable units, will make a significant contribution to the downtown housing mix. These new units will contribute to the tax base and will improve the vitality of the town center by increasing the after-hours population.

The proposed development will provide a mix of residential unit types. Most units will be two bedroom, two bath arrangements suitable for couples or small families. Five smaller two bedroom, one and one half bath units and seven one bedroom, one and one half bath units will provide options at a lower price point. Three affordable units as defined by 760 CMR 56 and two units affordable to middle income families will be included in the mix.

Fells Hardware is a beloved Winchester retail institution. The personal service and small town character of this store are well known. Fells is an important resource and contributes to the livability of Winchester. Keeping Fells Hardware on Main Street is a high priority. Retail use at the corner of Main and Elmwood will extend the retail use out from the center on the west side of Main Street, eliminating the present gap in the retail frontage.

Conclusion

We believe this proposed development is consistent with both the intent and the detailed requirements of the Winchester Zoning By-Law for new construction within the North Core sub-district of the CBD. This design seeks to balance the goals and aims of the Planning Board with the realities of new construction in the 21st Century.

654 Main Street		Base Zone Area Overlay		CBD North Core Floodplain		FPOD
Ground Use:	Retail	Group IV	Mixed Uses	REQUIRED		ALLOWED
Upper Use:	Residential	Group IV	Mixed Uses			ALLOWED
Lot Area		18708	SF	N.R.	SF	
		0.429476584	Acre			
Height				45	FT	BY RIGHT
				65	FT	SPECIAL PERMIT
FAR		28062		1.5		BY RIGHT
		46770		2.5		SPECIAL PERMIT
Front Setback				0	FT	Up to 10 feet for ramps
Side Setback				0	FT	Party Wall, 5 ft from historic
Rear Setback				20	FT	BY RIGHT
				15	FT	SPECIAL PERMIT
Open Space		3741.6	SF	20	%	
Parking			RES Min	.75/DU		Rear or in Bldg
			RES Max	1.5/DU		
			COMM Min	.75/1000		Expansion space only
			COMM Max	1.25/1000		
Historic Resource	Map 7.3.4	Yes				No demo without finding
Building Footprint		11659	SF	62.32%		
	Open Space	7049	SF	37.68%	SF	20.00% Min.
Frontage		363.4	Ft.		Ft.	
Setbacks	Front	0.3	Ft.	0/5	Ft.	
	Left	16.1	Ft.	0	Ft.	
	Right	3.4	Ft.	0	Ft.	
	Right Front	40.2	ft.	0	Ft.	
	Rear	N/A	Ft.	20	Ft.	No rear yards due to lot config
Mean Grade Computation		Elev.				
	Front Left Corner	22.2	Ft.	Rear Left Corner	28	
	Front Right Corner	21.8	Ft.	Rear Right Corner	28	
	Average	22.0		Average	28	
	Left Front Corner	22.2	Ft.	Right Front Corner	21.8	
	Left Rear Corner	28.0	Ft.	Right Rear Corner	28	
	Average	25.1	Ft.	Average	24.9	
	SITE Mean Grade	25.0	Ft.			
Height	Fl to FL	Elevation				
	Level One	14	22.20	Ft.	24.00	Residential lobby
	Level Two	12	36.20	Ft.		
	Level Three	10.66	48.20	Ft.		
	Level Four	10.66	58.86			
	Level Five	11.66	69.52			
	Main Flat Roof	0	81.18	Ft.		
		0		Ft.		
		58.98				
Height Above Mean Grade		56.18	Ft.	As of Right	45	Ft.
				Special Permit	65	Ft.
						SPECIAL PERMIT REQUIRED
						Dormers allowed
Stories		5			N.R.	
Floor Area Ratio	By Right	1.5	28062	SF	existing building area	3100
	Special Permit	2.5	46770	SF	existing gross	4131
					existing FAR	0.354319
Proposed Building	Gross	FAR AREA	Units			
	Basement	1654	0	0	Storage and mechanical areas	excluded by defintion
	First	13258	4,020	0	Parking outside building	1-BR 2-BR

Second	11659	11,659	9	3	6
Third	11659	11,659	9	2	7
Fourth	11,597	11,597	9	2	7
Fifth	7142	7,142	5	0	5
Total	56969		32	7	25

Retail Portion 3627 32

FAR Total 46,077 2.462957024 SPECIAL PERMIT REQUIRED

Parking Required	Residential	Min	.75 per DU	24	spaces	Affordable	10 %	3
		Max	1.5 per DU	48	spaces	Affordable	5 %	2
	Commercial	Min	.75 per 1000	3	spaces			5
		Max	1.25 per 1000	5	spaces			
	Total Min.			27	spaces			
	Total Max.			53	spaces			

Existing Grade & Basement Retail	6208	SF
Proposed Grade and Basement Retail	3627	SF

Since proposed retail is smaller than existing, no new parking required

Parking Provided	Grade	7	
	Garages	22	
	Total	29	OK
ADA Parking	521 CMR 23.2.1		

654 Main Street

UNIT SUMMARY

FLOOR	TYPE	NUMBER	# BR	# HALF	# FULL	AREA
B	RETAIL STG.	001	0	0	0	764
G	RETAIL	101		1		2858
2	RES	201	2	0	2	1020
2	RES	202	2	0	2	985
2	RES	203	2	0	2	1161
2	RES	204	2	1	1	1145
2	RES	205	2	0	2	1077
2	RES	206	1	1	1	815
2	RES	207	2	0	2	1173
2	RES	208	1	1	1	846
2	RES	209	1	1	1	822
3	RES	301	2	0	2	1035
3	RES	302	2	0	2	993
3	RES	303	2	0	2	1161
3	RES	304	2	1	1	1145
3	RES	305	2	0	2	1083
3	RES	306	1	1	1	815
3	RES	307	1	1	1	815
3	RES	308	2	0	2	1172
3	RES	309	2	0	2	999
4	RES	401	2	0	2	1009
4	RES	402	2	0	2	985
4	RES	403	2	0	2	1154
4	RES	404	2	1	1	1135
4	RES	405	2	0	2	1081
4	RES	406	1	1	1	815
4	RES	407	1	1	1	815
4	RES	408	2	0	2	1172
4	RES	409	2	0	2	999
5	RES	501	2	0	2	960
5	RES	502	2	0	2	962
5	RES	503	2	0	2	1125
5	RES	504	2	1	1	1105
5	RES	505	2	0	2	1078
			57	11	53	

32657 RESIDENTIAL

3622 RETAIL

36279 Total Unit
Area