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MEMORANDUM

To: The Design Advisory Board
From: Mary O'Neil, AICP, Principal Planner
RE: ZP18-0059CA/CU 308 Main Street
Date: August 22, 2017 Continued review

File: ZP18-0059CA/CU

Location: 308 Main Street

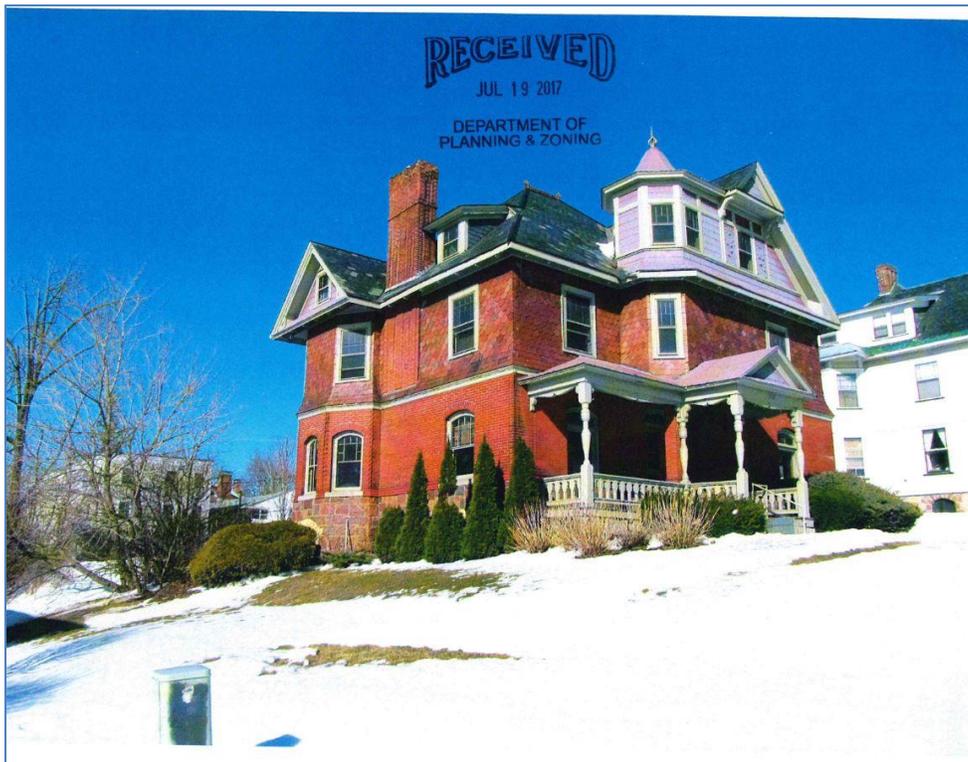
Zone: RH Ward: 8E

Date application accepted: July 19, 2017

1st DAB review: August 8, 2017

Applicant/ Owner: 308 GreenCastle, LLC (Bruce Baker, Greg Doremus)

Request: Change of use from office to residential; rear addition for a total of 8 residential units, parking reconfiguration and shared access with 323-325 College Street.



Background:

- **Zoning Permit 13-0800SN;** replace existing freestanding sign for Collins, McMahon & Harris with new freestanding sign. External illumination included. March, 2013.

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- **Non-Applicability of Zoning Permit Requirements 11-0473NA**; replace 2 condensers with same. November 2010.
- **Non-Applicability of Zoning Permit Requirements 10-0688NA**, replace aluminum storm windows. March 2010.
- **Zoning Permit 04-641**; pave existing gravel driveway and parking lot; construct flagging stone retaining wall to preserve/protect lilac bush in southwest corner of parking lot. No change in dimensions of driveway or parking lot. June 2004.
- **Zoning Permit 04-251**; install non-illuminated parallel sign for Gabel Law Firm. November 2003.
- **Zoning Permit 01-267**; replace nonilluminated free standing sign with new illuminated sign. December 2000.
- **Zoning Permit 98-322**; installation of nonilluminated freestanding sign. February 1998.
- **Zoning Permit 94-027**; installation of two ground AC units behind existing landscaping on side of law office structure. July 1993.
- **Zoning Permit (n.n.)**; convert the residential building at 308 Main Street into an office. August 1977.

Overview: 308 Main Street was constructed in 1884 by A.B. Fisher, one of Burlington’s most accomplished architects, as his own residence. It remains completely intact and represents very high style architecture; “a veritable catalogue of the techniques and materials used in the period.”¹ It is included within the Main Street / College Street Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1977 it was converted to office use.

The application requests Adaptive Reuse, and includes plans for a large three story addition in the rear to accommodate a total of 8 units. Parking will be reconfigured with new access established to 323-325 College Street for the purpose of shared parking.

DAB Motion 8.8.2017:

Motion by Steve Offenhartz: *Motion to table; request revised plans and elevations to create more pronounced articulation/ physical separation between the two masses, especially at the third floor roof line.*

Ron Wanamaker – 2nd.

Vote 5-0

Motion carries.

Revised plans received August 14, 2017

New comments in red.

¹ United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service. National Register of Historic Places, Main Street College Street Historic District, Resource #17, A.B. Fisher House (308 Main Street), Section 7 p. 18. Listed 10.13.1988.

Part 1: Land Division Design Standards

Although an access point to 323-325 College Street is proposed, there will be no land division. Not applicable.

Part 2: Site Plan Design Standards

Sec. 6.2.2 Review Standards

(a) Protection of Important Natural Features:

The lot currently has a paved access drive and parking lot in the rear. An approved site plan from 2004 illustrates at least five large trees (30'+ in height) along the northwest of the parking area; bushes in the same location, and at least three large lilac bushes on the west. ~~This landscaping as approved is not illustrated on the submitted site plan. A plan for their preservation or replacement is needed.~~ **The revised plan submitted via email 8.14.2017 illustrates 4 existing trees to remain, but these are on an adjoining property to the west. In fact, all but one new tree installation occurs on neighboring properties; not 308 Main. One "Autumn Flame" is proposed for the edge of the expanded parkig area on the north of the lot. Smaller shrubs are proposed on the west, adjacent to the addition.**

(b) Topographical Alterations:

The site has a defined grade change that drops to the west as the terrain drops downhill. The proposed development will take advantage of that grade change to provide for a half story on the lower level of the building addition. Modeling studies reflect a manipulation of grade (including a retaining wall) to facilitate the addition and parking area's integration into the slope. Contour studies, both before and after, will be necessary to ascertain changes to grade.

Contour lines have been provided on the revised plan. Assumedly this reflects post-construction topography.

(c) Protection of Important Public Views:

The proposed addition does not impede existing views down Main Street to the west.

(d) Protection of Important Cultural Resources:

Burlington's architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Archeological sites likely to yield information important to the city's or the region's pre-history or history shall be evaluated, documented, and avoided whenever feasible. Where the proposed development involves sites listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to Sec. 5.4.8(b).

See Section 5.4.8, below.

(e) Supporting the Use of Renewable Energy Resources:

The plan has not defined the inclusion of any wind, solar, water, geothermal or other renewable energy resources.

(f) Brownfield Sites:

This parcel is not identified on the Department of Environmental Conservation's Brownfield site list.

(g) Provide for nature's events:

Special attention shall be accorded to stormwater runoff so that neighboring properties and/or the public stormwater drainage system are not adversely affected. All development and site disturbance shall follow applicable city and state erosion and stormwater management guidelines in accordance with the requirements of Art 5, Sec 5.5.3.

Design features which address the effects of rain, snow, and ice at building entrances, and to provisions for snow and ice removal or storage from circulation areas shall also be incorporated.

The proposed addition is entirely self-enclosed; there are no apparent new exterior doors accessing the new building mass. A general entry will be provided on the east elevation. That existing covered entrance porch has been walled off so as to face the rear (north) of the property, accessible from the parking lot. Building elevations must include access stairs, which will be essential to gain entrance.

(h) Building Location and Orientation:

The building addition is attached to the north (rear) of the existing building. This is a common practice for expansion of habitable area. The direct and complete attachment of the new structure is not, however, well assimilated with the significant and elaborate historic building.

(i) Vehicular Access:

There is an existing access drive from Main Street which is proposed to continue. The applicant has included a new vehicular access path to 323-325 College Street to facilitate a shared use parking arrangement. This plan requires site reconfiguration and loss of parking at the adjacent parcel.

(j) Pedestrian Access:

The sidewalk to the main entrance will remain. There is no identified pedestrian path to the building, separate from vehicular circulation. This feature is required and will need to be articulated and exercised on the site plan. **A walkway had been added that connects the public sidewalk to the rear parking lot, and includes access to the easterly entry stairs.**

(k) Accessibility for the Handicapped:

ADA compliance is under the jurisdiction of the building inspector. There is no internal elevator or h/c parking spaces identified. Both are encouraged if not required.

(l) Parking and Circulation:

The parking lot was previous approved for 8 parking spaces (ZP04-641) with 7 spaces along the north side of the parking lot and one west of the rear entry. The required parking for the proposed 8 units is 16 parking spaces in the Neighborhood Parking District. The applicant has proposed **8** partially or wholly on site, with a connector to 323-325 College Street to access 2

additional spaces there. **Four parking spaces cross the northerly boundary line. New easterly spaces (3) are acquired by an expansion of the existing parking area and construction of a retaining wall.** Approval of the shared use plan and a parking waiver from the DRB will be required. Article 8 (Parking) mandates at least one parking space per unit to be provided on site. **Additionally, Section 8.1.5 Existing Structures – Change or Expansion of Use requires that the total additional parking requirements for the alteration, conversion, change or expansion be provided in accordance with that Article.** The DRB will be tasked with ascertaining the compliance with these standards. **The Design Advisory Board may weigh in on parking and circulation standards per this section.**

Generally, access will continue as existing from Main Street. Circulation is proposed between the two adjoining parcels (323-325 College Street to the north.) The proposed parking plan will provide a partial benefit 308 Main Street (for access to two additional spaces; 6 more are needed) and no identified benefit to 323-325 College Street, **which forfeits its three excess spaces (one is lost to the connector) and the additional coverage consumed by the trans-property line parking.** The properties are owned by different parties; a companion application for site changes to that other property accompanies this application.

The proposal for 308 Main Street makes demands beyond the parcel's capacity for required parking, and exceeds the requirement to the degree that further allowances (parking waiver, shared parking/access with abutting property, **loss of setbacks from the shared property line** and a parking management plan) are needed. In general terms, difficulty in meeting parking requirements signals that the intensity of use exceeds the ability of the parcel to meet the demand. Despite the articulated parking management plan, the proposed four bedroom units and the strained site and parking plan here illustrate that tension.

All parking areas shall provide a physical separation between moving and parked vehicles and pedestrians in a manner that minimizes conflicts and gives pedestrians a safe and unobstructed route to building entrance(s) or a public sidewalk.

There is no identified pedestrian path between the parking area and an entrance door, as required. The applicant shall identify one on a revised site plan.

(m) Landscaping and Fences:

As noted, the plan omits mention of the landscaping required in 2004 (large trees, established and new lilacs, foundation plantings) and only references replacement trees lost to parking expansion/reorganization. The trees proposed for replacement are on abutting properties (316 Main Street to the east, 323-325 College Street to the north.) Seven 4' tall shrubs are proposed for the west elevation which might help screen the expanded parking area and lower level of the addition.

A retaining wall is also proposed for the northwest corner of the parcel. ~~A contour map is needed to ascertain the existing topography and the degree of grade change proposed.~~ **Contour lines are provided on the west side of the project site on the revised site plan submitted 8.14.2017. No further information has been provided about the proposed retaining wall.** Any wall exceeding 3' in height will require review and approval of the city engineer and/or building inspector via the building permit process.

(n) Public Plazas and Open Space:

There are no public plazas on the site. For a large multi-unit residential building like this, an area for outdoor use would be welcome and provide a respite from the paved backyard that is proposed to be expanded.

(o) Outdoor Lighting:

Where exterior lighting is proposed the applicant shall meet the lighting performance standards as per Sec 5.5.2.

Pole and bollard lights are suggested. Their proposed location is not identifiable on the site plan. The plan must be revised to identify location of new lighting, and be accompanied by a photometric plan to ascertain compliance with Section 5.5.2. **The lighting plan remains outstanding.**

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design:

Exterior storage areas, machinery and equipment installations, service and loading areas, utility meters and structures, mailboxes, and similar accessory structures shall utilize setbacks, plantings, enclosures and other mitigation or screening methods to minimize their auditory and visual impact on the public street and neighboring properties to the extent practicable.

Utility and service enclosures and screening shall be coordinated with the design of the principal building, and should be grouped in a service court away from public view. On-site utilities shall be placed underground whenever practicable. Trash and recycling bins and dumpsters shall be located, within preferably, or behind buildings, enclosed on all four (4) sides to prevent blowing trash, and screened from public view.

Any development involving the installation of machinery or equipment which emits heat, vapor, fumes, vibration, or noise shall minimize, insofar as practicable, any adverse impact on neighboring properties and the environment pursuant to the requirements of Article 5, Part 4 Performance Standards.

~~The location of trash and recycling is not identified and must be. Outside roll-off containers are not recommended.~~ **has been identified as a shared dumpster with 323-325 College Street. Recycling is not identified. Whether the existing dumpster has the capacity and service schedule for pickup to attend to the demands of both buildings must be articulated.**

The location of meters, mailboxes, utility connections, mechanical equipment and similar features must be included in site plans/building elevations as warranted. All new utility service must be undergrounded. Submitted spec sheets include through-the-roof or wall venting for proposed heating units. ~~The location of these proposed building penetrations and their impact on the visual character of both buildings will be important to understand.~~ **The applicant defined the location of new vents to be under the easterly access stairs when installed.**

Part 3: Architectural Design Standards

Sec. 6.3.2 Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment:

1. Massing, Height and Scale:

The proposal for a 3 ½ story flat roofed addition is quite contrary to the existing building and most within the streetscape. Submitted photos draw a parallel to the adjoining Captain Dan Lyons' house (1856); adjacent on the lot to the west. That structure precedes the Fisher House by more than a score of years. The principal structure has a low pitched hip roof with boxed cornice and broad projecting eaves, not a flat roof. It differs stylistically (early Italianate – and anecdotally originally had a roof lantern) and in massing (major structure with derivative rear ell); quite different from what is proposed at the back of 308 Main Street.

The scale proposed for the new addition is quite strident, given the sensitivity of the existing building and the proposed disparate architectural style. The addition is clearly visible from the streetscape (west, south and north) and generates conflict in proximity and appropriate scale to the Fisher House.

From the National Park Service Preservation Brief #14:

A new addition should always be subordinate to the historic building; it should not compete in size, scale or design with the historic building. An addition that bears no relationship to the proportions and massing of the historic building—in other words, one that overpowers the historic form and changes the scale—will usually compromise the historic character as well.

In a competitive if not superlative scale, the addition challenges the massing of the existing building and detracts from the importance of this exceptional structure.

Revised plans illustrate a modest connector between the existing building and the proposed new addition.

2. Roofs and Rooflines.

Although the applicant cites a neighboring building with a flat roof as support for this design, the addition bears no relationship to the existing historic structure. The sharp delineation of the roof form is quite contrary to the complex organization of the existing house; the differences abrupt and unsettling.

Direction given by the DAB's motion 8.8.2017 to *create more pronounced articulation/ physical separation between the two masses, especially at the third floor roof line* have spurred revised plans with a connector that slightly pushes the addition north, providing a pitched roof at the third floor between building masses.

3. Building Openings

The addition presents horizontal continuity of window bands. The windows themselves show no relationship to the existing building other than their arrangement so as to suggest floorlevels.

(b) Protection of Important Architectural Resources:

Burlington's architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Where the proposed development involves buildings listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to Sec. 5.4.8. The introduction of new buildings to a historic district listed on a state or national register of historic places shall make every effort to be compatible with nearby historic buildings.

See Section 5.4.8.

(c) Protection of Important Public Views:

See Section 6.2.2 (c).

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge:

Although the addition is proposed for the rear, it is clearly discernable from the streetfront and challenges both the scale and importance of the existing historic building. Its proximity and visibility present conflict and challenge the primary structure.

(e) Quality of materials:

All development shall maximize the use of highly durable building materials that extend the life cycle of the building, and reduce maintenance, waste, and environmental impacts. Such materials are particularly important in certain highly trafficked locations such as along major streets, sidewalks, loading areas, and driveways. Efforts to incorporate the use of recycled content materials and building materials and products that are extracted and/or manufactured within the region are highly encouraged.

Owners of historic structures are encouraged to consult with an architectural historian in order to determine the most appropriate repair, restoration or replacement of historic building materials as outlined by the requirements of Art 5, Sec. 5.4.8.

There is no submitted evidence that the applicant team has consulted with an architectural historian to determine most appropriate building arrangement or materials.

Fiber wood grain exterior doors, vinyl clad windows, fiber cement board siding and a membrane roof are proposed. All are considered of acceptable durability for new construction.

(f) Reduce energy utilization:

All new construction is required to meet the Guidelines for Energy Efficient Construction pursuant to the requirements of Article VI, Energy Conservation, Section 8 of the City of Burlington Code of Ordinances.

(g) Make advertising features complementary to the site:

Any exterior signage will require a new sign permit.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design:

See Section 6.2.2. (p), above.

(i) Make spaces secure and safe:

The development shall adhere to all building and life safety code, as defined by the building inspector and fire marshal. For multi unit buildings, intercom systems are recommended.

Sec. 5.4.8 Historic Buildings and Sites

The City seeks to preserve, maintain, and enhance those aspects of the city having historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural merit. Specifically, these regulations seek to achieve the following goals:

To preserve, maintain and enhance Burlington’s historic character, scale, architectural integrity, and cultural resources;

To foster the preservation of Burlington’s historic and cultural resources as part of an attractive, vibrant, and livable community in which to live, work and visit;

To promote a sense of community based on understanding the city’s historic growth and development, and maintaining the city’s sense of place by protecting its historic and cultural resources; and,

To promote the adaptive re-use of historic buildings and sites.

(a) Applicability:

These regulations shall apply to all buildings and sites in the city that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

308 Main Street is listed on both the State of Vermont list of Historic Resources and the National Register of Historic Resources within the Main Street – College Street Historic District.

(b) Standards and Guidelines:

The following development standards, following the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, shall be used in the review of all applications involving historic buildings and sites subject to the provisions of this section and the requirements for Design Review in Art 3, Part 4. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards are basic principles created to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site. They are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing and replacing historic features, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. These Standards are intended to be applied in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

- 1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*

The building was constructed as a residence; the return to residential use is consistent with its origin.

- 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

The existing historic structure will be retained and remain relatively intact. The point of contact (rear addition) is the area of connection and therefore will no longer be visible.

The overall character of the property will be **significantly** changed with this development:

- a. The immediate attachment, with a **most modest** interstitial connector, provides an abrupt and brusque change from the historic structure to the new addition. There is **little** comfortable transition between the old and the new.
- b. The proposed addition challenges the existing building in scale and massing rather than deferring in scale and location to the importance of the Fisher House.
- c. The addition is overtly visible from several public vantage points.
- d. There is no relationship between the historic building and the proposed new addition. Window sizes and treatments, wall finishes, building mass and volume, and overall embellishment contrasts starkly with the existing building.
- e. The proposed addition and expansion of the parking area will alter the existing grade of the site. At present, the grade falls away to the west; the Fisher House is characteristically prominent at the plateau with sprawling lawn. The proposal of expanded paving, the 3 ½ story addition and a new retaining wall will create an artificial



and visible platform for parking and remove the importance of the historic structure seated atop a rising slope. The manipulation of the grade reduces the spatial prominence existing at the site.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

While conjectural features are not proposed, the adoption of an architectural style presumably motivated by a neighboring property is inappropriate for this context.

4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

Not applicable.

5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

The National Register nomination clearly outlines the deliberate and spectacular arrangement of the Fisher House. Understanding the thoughtful, intentional composition of architect Fisher's skill is essential in consideration of any alteration. The proposed building addition misses the

mark in finding a companionable solution to the complexity and accomplishment of that work. The lack of harmony between the old and new is striking and lacks compatibility with the existing building.

- Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials recognizing that new technologies may provide an appropriate alternative in order to adapt to ever changing conditions and provide for an efficient contemporary use. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

The work is not intended to address failure or repair, but to add new building volume and housing units.

- Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*

No chemical or physical treatments (other than building addition) are proposed.

- Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

No archaeological resources have been identified at this site.

- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and **will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.***

The proposed addition, expanded parking and new circulation path collectively detract from the historic character of the property.



The proposed addition is clearly differentiated from the old, but competes with the existing structure in style, proximity, scale, massing and site alteration. The building style is architecturally divergent (~~Italianate~~ ~~adhered to a Queen Anne~~); the contrast is both immediate in juxtaposition and discordant in articulation. There is absolutely no relationship between the two, with the direct attachment of new to old adding further injury. The addition lacks an awareness of the success of the original design (ordered horizontal organization despite differing materials and alternating mass; controlled and deliberate use of a single monochromatic color to tie divergent features, complex roof form characteristic of the style). The building addition remains too large, too visible, and *too* differentiated to be compatible with the existing historic structure. The proposed addition and expansion of parking artificially alters the grade that at present isolates the important building within the site and atop a rising knoll. The expanded parking also introduces further visual friction and detracts from the building's streetfront appearance. Lastly, the increased intensity of use exceeds the parcel's ability to absorb the desired expansion; parking is proposed across parcel boundary lines and onto an abutting property. While the proposal offers to return to its original residential use, the proposed intensification of that use (8 units, the new with 4 bedrooms each) stresses the site and structure where it cannot comfortably accommodate the demand while retaining the historic character inherent in the site.

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

While unlikely, it may be possible to consider the removal of the building addition and expanded parking area. The proposal may potentially be considered reversible; however, Burlington's land use demonstrates that rear building additions for additional units remain permanent.

Items for the Board's consideration:

1. A reduction in the size of the addition, and attachment via a small connector is encouraged. Minimization of the size of the residential units would be a path to that end.
2. ~~The applicant shall provide a plan of existing landscaping (large trees, bushes, lilaes as required under ZP04-641) with a plan for preservation, construction protection, or replacement.~~
3. ~~A plan including contours, both before and after development, shall be submitted to understand manipulation of grades and final topography.~~
4. ~~The plan omits existing condensing units, which must be included on site plans and elevations.~~
5. ~~The applicant shall define a pedestrian path between the parking area and the building entrance that separates vehicles and people.~~
6. A plan and elevation of the proposed retaining wall shall be submitted. Any wall exceeding 3' in height will require review and approval of the city engineer and building inspector via the building permit process.
7. The site plan shall include the location of proposed lighting fixtures, and be accompanied by a photometric plan subject to review under the standards of Section 5.5.2.
8. The applicant shall provide a narrative and location for ~~proposed trash~~ and recycling facilities.

9. Mailboxes, meters, utility connections, ~~mechanical equipment~~ and similar shall be illustrated on site plans and building elevations as appropriate.
10. Any new utility connections shall be undergrounded.
11. Satisfaction of minimum parking requirements, and any parking waiver will be at the discretion of the DRB.
12. The location of proposed venting locations must be **firmly** identified on building elevations to assess visual impacts and appropriateness.
13. **Correction is made to the applicant calculation of maximum possible residential units on the parcel. The appropriate method of calculating units per acre is defined in Section 5.5.2.7 (a) 1. The applicant submits that 11 units would be allowed; following the guidance of the standard, $11 / 0.27$ (lot size in acres) = 40.74, exceeding the maximum allowable of 40 per acre. Per this method, the maximum allowable units for this lot size would be 10, without bonuses.**