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February 17, 2022

John F. Field, P.E.
Land Use Coordinator
Inspector of buildings and Zoning Enforcement Officer
Town of Weston
P.O. Box 378
Weston, MA 02493

Re: Landscape Architectural Peer Review of 518 South Avenue, Weston,
MA Hanover-Weston 40B Proposal

Dear John and members of the Board,
I am writing to provide you with a preliminary landscape architectural peer review for the proposed Hanover-Weston 40B development located at 518 South Avenue in Weston.

My comments will be based on review of the developer's plans and drawings; reports prepared by other peer reviewers; reports, letters, and presentations at hearings by the developer, peer reviewers, and the neighbor's consultants.

For this report I have reviewed the following documents:

From the Developer:

- Hanover Weston Comprehensive Permit Package set of drawings dated 22 November 2021 prepared by Cube 3, Metrowest Engineering, Tetra Tech, and GWH Landscape Architects (total of 49 sheets)
- GIS Project Locus Map, Comprehensive Permit Plans Hanover-Weston; source: town of Weston GIS, prepared by Tetra Tech, dated June 7, 2019
- Slide Show: Hanover Weston, 518 South Ave. Weston Zoning Board of Appeals, December 14, 2021
- Hanover Weston: By-law Waiver Request
- Slide Show: Hanover Weston, 518 South Ave., Weston Zoning Board of Appeals, January 18, 2022
- Site Distance Study, Proposed Route 30 Site Driveway, Weston, MA, prepared by Vanasse & Associates, Inc., dated 9/30/21

- Memorandum from James G. Ward and Valerie A. Moore of Nutter re: Comprehensive Permit Application 518 South Ave LLC Grading in Right of Way

From Abutters Consultants:

- Letter from Dennis A. Murphy, Esq. of Hill Law re: Expert Slides from January 31, 2022 hearing on 518 South Avenue, Weston.
- Slide Show from McDonald Morrissey Associates, LLC, Groundwater Hydrologists: “Presentation to the Weston Zoning Board of Appeals, Preliminary Comments on Revised MODFLOW Model and Groundwater Mounding Analysis Hanover Weston, Michael Mobile, Ph.D.,CGWP, January 31, 2022
- Power Point presentation: Presentation to Weston Zoning Board of Appeals, Civil Issue, John C. Chessia, P.E., Chessia Consulting Services, LLC, January 31, 2022
- Power Point presentation: Scott Horsley, Weston PPT revised 013122
- Letter from Luke H. Legere, Esq. or McGregor Legere & Stevens Attorneys at law, P.C. re: 510,518,540 South Avenue / Hanover-Weston 40B Proposal Unresolved Traffic Issues, Dated February 10, 2022
- Letter from Dennis A. Murphy, Esq. of Hill Law re: Off-site hydrogeologic data adjacent to 518 South Avenue, Weston, dated January 24, 2022
- Report: HYDROGEOLOGIC EVALUATION South Avenue Properties Near Hanover-Weston Project, Weston, MA. January 2022. Prepared for: Hill Law, 6 Beacon Street, Suite 600, Boston, MA 02108. Prepared by” Truslow Resource Consulting LLC, 959 Islington Street, Suite 2, Portsmouth, NH 03801; Danna Truslow, P.G.,C.G.
- Letter from Scott W. Horsley, Water Resources Consultant, dated 24 January 2022, re: 518 South Avenue, Weston, MA.

From Town of Weston:

- Letter from Weston School Committee to Weston Zoning Board of Appeals Dated September 13, 2021 re: Hanover Weston-518 South Avenue. Letter refers to School Bus safety and access to the site.

From Peer Reviewers:

- Memo from J. Matthew Davis & Associates, LLC, J. Matthew Davis, PhD, re: Peer review of groundwater mounding analysis for 518 South Ave project, dated January 14, 2022
- Slides presented by Matt Davis (J Matthew Davis & Associates LLC) at town of Weston MA ZBA Meeting on Jan 18, 2022
- Memorandum from Professional Services Corporation, PC to Weston Zoning Board of Appeals. Mark S. Bartlett, PE, Thomas C. Houston, PE, AICP. Re; Peer Review of Stormwater Management, Sanitary Sewer System, Water Supply System and Site Planning Elements
- Letter from Patrick C. Garner Company, Inc. dated January 14, 2022, Subject: Wetland Impact Review, Hanover-Weston 40B 518 south Avenue
- Letter from Davis Square Architects, Clifford J. Boehmer, AIA, dated August 1, 2021 re; Preliminary Peer Review of 518 South Avenue, Weston

- Letter from Davis Square Architects, Clifford J. Boehmer, AIA, dated August 1, 2021 Revised January 14, 2022. Re: Revised Preliminary Peer Review of 518 south Avenue, Weston.

I have attended three Zoom meetings related to the project as follows:

- January 12, 2022 with John Field and other Peer Reviewers
- January 18, 2022 Zoning Board Hearing
- January 31, 2022 Zoning Board Hearing

Site Description:

The project site, known as 518 South Avenue, Weston, MA consists of three lots combined to contain a total of +/- 9.54 Acres as follows:

518 South Avenue; Deed book 72047 page 547, Map 43, Block 30, Lot 10 contains +/- 3.91 Acres or +/- 170,407 SF. Currently this lot has a single family home, tennis court, and gravel driveway. The lot has heavy tree cover.

518 South Avenue; Deed Book 72047, page 547, Map 44, block 18, Lot 0 contains +/- 4.69 Acres or +/- 204,494 SF, over half of which are flagged as Wetlands. A gravel drive runs along the Western property line through the 25' wetland buffer zone to access the previous mentioned lot. The lot is mainly a forested wetland.

540 South Avenue: Deed Book 72443 page 356, Map 43, block 29, Lot 0 contains +/- .94 Acres or +/- 40860 SF. This lot contains a single family house and driveway, and has mature trees along the property lines.

Current Zoning for the site is Residential A. The applicant is requesting waivers from the Zoning By-Laws including, but not limited to:

- Section V.B: Multi Family Residence
- Section VI.B: Minimum Street Frontage (Residence A is 250', they are asking for 140')
- Section VI.B: Minimum lot width at street set back line (Residence A is 250', they request 135')
- Section VI.B: Minimum Set Back from street side line (Residence A is 60', they request 50' for WWTP)
- Section VI.B: Minimum Side Yard Set Back (Residence A is 45', they request 37.1' to residential building)
- Section VI.E: Building Height (Residence A is 32' or 3 stories for Flat Roofs, and 37' or 2.5 stories, whichever is less, for Pitched Roofs. The request is for 4 Stories, 54.4')
- Section VIII.A: Require 2 Parking Spaces per Dwelling Unit, The request is now for 1.63 spaces per unit.

The applicant is also asking relief from certain Wetland Regulations including the 25' No-Disturb Policy and Approval and Mitigation requirements for removal of trees in resource areas and buffer zones.

The applicant is asking for relief from certain Planning Board site Plan Approval and Rules & Regulations including, but not limited to: Art.XXVII: Stormwater & Erosion Control By-law and Regulations; Art. XXIII Scenic Road By-law.

Context:

The Site is located on the South Side of South Avenue, Route 30, which is a heavily used road especially during the commuting hours. There are no sidewalks or bike lanes along Route 30 in the area around the proposed development. There is an entrance to Route 128/95 and the Massachusetts Turnpike approximately two and a half miles to the East.

Development in the neighborhood is of low-density single family housing with wooded buffers between houses, religious institutions (seminary and church), horse stables, and educational institutions (Weston High School and Middle School). As stated above, there is little infrastructure for pedestrian use, it is not a highly “walkable” location. Most transportation in and out of the neighborhood is by automobile.

Proposal:

The Applicant, Hanover RS Limited Partnership, proposes to build 180 Residential Apartment Units (a mix of one, two and three bedroom units) along with Waste Water Treatment Plant, Subsurface Effluent Disposal System, Stormwater Collections and Drainage Systems, Parking and amenities at 518 South Avenue. The Applicant proposes to combine three single family residential lots into one lot of +/- 9.54 Acres.

The apartments will be located in one large building, mainly 4 stories in height but with some sections 5 stories and some sections 3 stories. Along with the apartments the building will house a 5 story Parking Garage, social spaces for the residents, offices for the building managers, and an enclosed courtyard with a swimming pool. A second building for Waste Water Treatment will be sited at the entrance to the site.

The **Existing Lot Area** is 415,761 SF (see Tetra Tech Context Plan ,C-1 rev. date 11-22-21 Table of Dimensional Data).

The Existing (and Proposed) **Wetland Coverage** on the lot is 112,450 SF or 27.1%

The current **Building Coverage** on the lot is 6,119 SF, or 1.5% of the lot, the proposed Building Coverage is 88,755 SF, or 21.4% of the lot.

The current **Open Space** on the lot is 406,945 SF, or 97.9%, the proposed Open Space is 246,996 SF or 59.4% (112,450 SF of that is Wetland so that leaves 134,546 SF or 32.36%).

The current **Undisturbed Open Space** is 352,486 SF or 84.8%, The proposed Undisturbed Open Space is 143, 092 SF or 34.4%(again 112,450 SF of that is Wetland so, Undisturbed Open Space that is not Wetland is 30,642 SF or 7.3%).

The current **Impervious Surface** area is 8,816SF or 2.1% and the proposed is 168,765 SF or 40.6 % of the site.

72 % of the site is proposed for development, only the Wetland Area remains undisturbed (and even that is not completely untouched with proposed adjustment to the gravel driveway for fire access). The impact on the existing vegetation, and any fauna it supports, will be catastrophic. A rough count of over 350 trees shown on the Existing Conditions Plans will be removed (trees on the plan are typically over 6” in caliper so this count does not include smaller trees).

Clearing the lot of so many mature trees will also impact the neighboring lots by reducing the woodland buffer, decreasing screening between properties, and missing an opportunity to use current large vegetation as scaling elements for the new 4(5) story building. The removal of large mature white pines in the proposed building foot print may impact the view shed across the wetlands from properties along Wellesley Street including numbers 435, 419, 371 and 451 as well as 500 and 502 South Avenue. Most of the existing trees in the wetlands are deciduous which provide less winter screening.

Grading:

The Applicant is proposing major grading changes to the site in order to accommodate the Building, Parking Garage, Roadways, Waste Water Treatment, and Storm Water Infiltration. This is resulting in a proposed net import of fill of 22,086 CY (See Tetra Tech Cut/Fill Analysis Plan Sheet 1 Rev. Date 11-22-21)

Because of the requirements for certain structures to be minimum distances above the seasonal high water table, and in order to fit all of their program elements on to a tight site, the Applicant is proposing to install retaining walls around virtually the entire “buildable” portion of the site. In many locations this wall is less than 4’ off the property line. The wall ranges in height from flush with grade to over 11 feet.

The proposed walls will have a great impact on the neighbors. For instance at number 534 South Avenue the retaining wall is proposed across the rear property line, at one point it looks as if there is no distance between the wall and the property line. The wall ranges in height from 8.5’ to 11.2’. The Ring Road for the development sits on top of the wall, maybe 2 feet away from the edge allowing for no possible opportunity to screen the 4 story building from the single family home below. This effectively makes the building appear to be 58’ in height instead of the 48’ shown on the elevations. The wall itself is an object that may not be aesthetically pleasing to the neighbors and should be far enough inside the Applicant’s property line that it can be properly screened and/or mitigated with plantings. In the current plan there is no room to allow for this.

The proposed layout for the walls shown on the various plans does not appear to be in synch with the Construction Details shown for the walls (see Tetra Tech C-4). (The details, by the way, are mis-labelled –“Gravity Wall Retaining Offsite Adjacent to Porous Paving” Shows “Gravity Wall Cross Section with HD Base Units” and vice versa.) These types of Manufactured Concrete Unit walls typically take up more horizontal space than is shown on the site plans. They are usually not constructed perfectly vertical and step back into the slope to prevent tipping. This type of wall may not be the best choice for locations where a water proof barrier is required because they

are usually engineered to allow water to seep through the wall to relieve hydrostatic pressure. The note on the Detail says “Construction Design by others Not to Scale” and “Site specific retaining walls shall be design/build by the contractor and the retaining wall design shall be stamped by a Massachusetts Registered professional structural engineer prior to issuance of a building permit”.

It is my opinion that the walls are such a critical piece of the proposed design that they should be fully detailed and engineered as part of this approval process. If the walls fail there will be serious consequences for the neighbors, the wetlands, and the future residents of the property.

Circulation:

Vehicular: The site is proposed to have two entrances/ access points. The Main Entry Road will be located on the current 540 South Avenue property. It will be a 24’ wide two way road for +/- 135’ where it will split and become an 18’ wide road on either side of a planted island that is +/- 75’ long and +/- 21’ wide, the rounded ends of the island have a radius of 11’. At the end of the island one can turn right and follow the Ring Road counter clockwise around the building to the Garage entrance, approximately 260 feet from the corner of the building. The Ring Road is marked for two way traffic up until the Garage Entrance. Just beyond the Garage there is a sign for “Authorized Vehicles Only” and the width of the Ring Road is reduced to 20’. For +/- 120 the paving remains as Bituminous Concrete, the slope in this portion of the road is 10:1. At this point the paving turns into Porous Paving and the road is labeled “For Emergency Use Only”. The Ring Road continues around the building for approximately 520’ where it arrives at the “Trash Room” and “Move In Lobby”, here it becomes Bituminous Concrete paving again. The road continues beyond the “Move In Lobby” and is still 20’ wide and marked as “For Authorized Vehicles” until it turns the corner at the front of the building and becomes 24’ wide. Continuing forward past the 6 parking spaces to the left of the main entrance to the building one can turn right and follow the East side of the island, one way, to exit the site on the two way entry road.

The area directly in front of the Front Entrance to the Building and the planted island is designated “Mail and Package Loading Zone”. This space is the same width as the Ring Road, +/- 24’, and is part of the two way traffic pattern. Trucks entering and standing may have difficulty maneuvering in this zone. The radius of the island should be evaluated to confirm that the physical needs (turning radii, for example) of delivery trucks of all standard sizes are met by this proposed layout. There is no extra width allowed for a truck to pull out of the flow of traffic to allow for other vehicles to safely pass while the truck is standing for loading and unloading. This spot in the vehicular circulation layout presents as a “bottle neck”.

For much of the length of the Ring Road, starting at the North West corner of the building there is a Retaining Wall adjacent to the road. The plans show an approximate 2 foot gap between the edge of the pavement and the inner edge of the wall. For much of the run of the wall on the West and South sides of the building the retaining wall is located approximately 3 off of the property line and ranges in height along this +/- 945 foot length from 1.5 to almost 8 feet. Along the South side of the site, after the Ring Road turns North along the East side of the building, the retaining wall continues along the 25’ No Disturb line for the adjacent wetlands up to and along the secondary Emergency Vehicles Only access road. On the other side of the Emergency Access Road the retaining wall picks up again in the same horizontal relationship to the paving on the road. This portion of the retaining wall ranges in height from 7.5’ to 11.5’.

The Secondary Access Road is for Emergency Use only, specifically the Fire Department, and will be gated closed at most times. This entrance to the site is located on South Avenue almost directly across from DiBeneditto Drive. It is proposed to be 20' wide and will be built in the general location of an existing Gravel Driveway running between the property line with 526 South Avenue and the adjacent wetlands to the East. Most of this road will be within the 25' Wetland Buffer zone and will require retaining walls on both sides.

On the plans the current existing driveway appears to range in width from 9 to 12 feet. The new roadway is proposed to have two 7' wide paved tracks with a 5' wide gravel strip and/or Bioswale in the center of the road. I question the practicality of this design. If the purpose of the trench in the center of an emergency access road is to decrease impervious surface on the site and increase infiltration, why not just make the road itself narrower to say 14', as is currently requested by the Weston Fire Department on residential driveways, or if that feels too narrow even 16' or 18' would be better than 20' with a possibility of catching a tire in the trench. One even surface across the road will be easier for winter maintenance such as plowing, and basically no maintenance the rest of the year. The proposed Bioswale would need yearly maintenance such as weeding and testing to make sure it was still draining. Even a gravel center strip will require some maintenance to keep weeds from clogging it up.

Pedestrian:

The existing condition of the site is not pedestrian friendly between the site and the surrounding neighborhood and rest of the town. There are no sidewalks on the South side of South Avenue (Route 30) and it is a very busy road. The site plans do show a proposed 5' wide concrete side walk but that is off-property and I am not sure of the status of that proposal. It would definitely help to better connect the development to the town if sidewalks were installed.

A 5' wide sidewalk is proposed along the East side of the entry drive adjacent to the road, there is no separation between the road and the sidewalk. As this is the main entrance to the site and there will be many car trips per day and children living on site, perhaps there should be sidewalks on both sides of the entry road and there could be some planted buffer between the road and the sidewalk for safety reasons.

A 5' wide sidewalk runs across the front of the building allowing access to the 10 parking spaces. On the right side the walk follows along the building to the garage entrance and dead ends. On the left side the walk dead ends at the "Authorized Vehicles Only" sign even though all the public outdoor spaces are on the East side of the building so there is no direct pedestrian connection between the front of the building and the outside usable spaces.

There is a sidewalk coming out of a side entrance which accesses the dog parks and then follows the building South to a crosswalk across the Ring Road. A sidewalk from the Trash Room hugs the roadway heading South eventually to the Play Area on the South side of the building. In order to access any of the other designed outdoor spaces one has to cross the Ring Road.

There are no designated pedestrian paths on the West side of the building south of the Garage Entrance.

There are missed opportunities with the design of this site for walking trails and contact with nature. If the Building and the Road surrounding it did not take up so much of the space on the site it could be much more pedestrian friendly. With out the proposed side walks on Route 30 the development will be an isolated island for pedestrians.

School Bus:

The Applicant's current proposal for the development is for 180 one, two, and three bedroom apartments. It is assumed that there will be families with school aged children living at Hanover Weston.

In a memo to the Weston Zoning Board of Appeals dated September 13, 2021 the Weston School Committee made the following requests regarding the safety of school aged children residing at the site:

"The Applicant will not prohibit the entry of school buses for the purpose of loading or unloading passengers from the property.

The applicant will provide a dedicated off-street paved surface, within thirty feet of one of the Development's public entrances continuous with the Development's driveway, intended for the safe loading and unloading of passengers from a full-sized school bus. The driveway shall be of sufficient width and dimensions to allow for full size school buses to turnaround without being required to drive in reverse."

The current site design does not meet these requests. A full size school bus requires an inside turning radius of 21.5'. The seemingly most likely best location for a school bus pick up and drop off would be near the front entrance to the building where students would not have to cross the road to board the bus. It may be possible to accommodate this on the site if the main Entry Road is redesigned to have a circle instead of a long narrow island where the road splits to become 2 one way roads. I suggest that the Applicant explore some options to address this important safety issue.

Bikes:

As previously discussed, there are no side walks along the South side of Route 30, nor are there any dedicated Bike Lanes. For adults who are seasoned bicycle commuters this may not present a problem, but for novice riders, recreational riders, and children this could pose a safety risk.

The Applicant is obviously expecting that some of the future residents will be using bikes either for commuting or for recreational purposes as they are providing for bicycle storage in the parking garage. For the safety of their resident riders I suggest exploring the idea of incorporating a dedicated bike lane into the circulation system for the site. Bike parking areas should also be incorporated at ground level for visitors and frequent riders. There may also be an opportunity to create a bike trail away from the vehicular roadway for young children learning how to ride bikes.

Parking:

Most of the onsite parking is located in a 4.5 story parking garage located on the interior of the building. There are 10 surface level parking spaces adjacent to the front entry to the building. The Applicant is requesting relief from supplying 2 parking spaces per dwelling unit and proposes to provide 1.63 spaces per unit. As previously stated in this report, this development is proposed in a car-centric neighborhood. Most of the future residents are expected to be car dependent for commuting to work, going to the grocery store, and other activities. In addition to the residents there will be a need for the residents' guests and employees of the building to park, where will they park? Where are there dedicated parking spaces for employees and visitors?

Snow loading:

In New England having a plan for snow removal is important. Snow must be removed from roads and walkways of the development for access and safety reasons. The snow can not be pushed into the street so it must either be stored on site in designated areas or trucked off site. The Applicant has provided a "Snow Storage Site Plan" prepared by GWH Landscape Architects, Dated 11-22-2021. On this plan they show three areas for storing snow.

The first area is located along the Front Entry Drive on both sides of the road about halfway up the drive between the branch to the Waste Water Treatment building and the planted island. On the East side of the drive the storage area is indicated beyond the 5' wide sidewalk and is also surrounding a proposed tree. If the snow starts to melt or the banks become too high it could hinder passage on the sidewalk causing people to walk on the drive in potential conflict with vehicles. If salt is used on the roadway before it is plowed and then plowed around the tree(s) it could harm the trees.

The second storage area is located in the North West corner beyond the Ring Road. This looks to be a small area and is beyond a lowish retaining wall.

The third area is proposed for the South West corner of the site below a 6' retaining wall and behind proposed new trees. I question the logistics of how the snow will get to the proposed location. This is another illustration of how the current design does not allow room for all the necessary requirements of the site.

There is no indication on the plans of where snow from the top level of the garage will be stored. With the limited number of parking spaces available this could present a problem for winter parking.

There is no indication on the plans of where snow removed from the Emergency Only Access road for the Fire Department through the wetlands will be stored. It should not be allowed to be pushed into the resource area.

Out Door Spaces:

The Applicant proposes several out door spaces with designated uses including: "Residential Amenity Courtyard" with Pool (+/- 7,600 SF); "Synthetic Turf Small Dog Run" (+/- 1,650 SF); "Synthetic Turf Large Dog Run" (+/-3,345 SF); on the Eastern side of the building between the building and the Ring Road there is an area of mixed paved seating areas and planting +/- 45

wide and +/- 150' long, between the "Trash Loading Zone" and the first seating area there is a Turf panel of +/- 2,925 SF; On the Southern side of the Building there is a +/- 27' by 35' (+/-945 SF) area with Play Ground Equipment next to a paved seating area of +/- 24' x 16'; Across the Ring Road from the "Trash Loading Zone" on the Eastern Side of the building is an area of mixed paving and "Turf Amendment Area" of approximately 9,600 SF.

Residential Amenity Courtyard with Pool.

The courtyard is approximately 80' x 95' and surrounded on four sides by a four story building. A swimming pool (approximately 25' x 46') is located in the Southern half of the courtyard. There is a fence running across the courtyard approximately 25' from the Northern wall of the space separating the swimming pool area from the rest of the court yard. A shadow study should be conducted in order to see how much sun light enters the courtyard and where it falls at certain times of the day in all seasons. This information will be useful for siting the pool, choosing plant material and evaluating light orientation for the apartments surrounding the courtyard on all four sides. It is difficult from the current site level plans to see where residents may access the courtyard, and two sets of doors on the Northern side are shown entering into planting beds.

More Detail on the design of Courtyard is needed to understand Accessibility to the residents, Light and Shadows, viability of planting, and screening/buffering of views and noise to the adjacent apartments.

Dog Runs:

Two Dog runs are located at the North East corner of the building between the building and the Ring Road. Combined they total almost 5,000 SF. This is a fairly large location with close proximity to the front entrance but no direct sidewalk connection.

Area against East side of building South of "Trash Room":

Just south of the entrance to the "Trash Room" there is a string of designed spaces between the building and the Ring Road. A sidewalk parallel to and approximately 20 feet off the building provides access to this area. The spaces start with a panel of Lawn approximately 45 feet wide and 65 feet long followed by some paved and planted seating areas.

Children's Play Area:

Follow the sidewalk through the string of spaces discussed above to the South Side of the building to a 27' x 35' (+/-) area with Playground Equipment. (+/- 945 SF) . Next to the Playground equipment is a small paved sitting area (+/- 24' x 16'). This is the only spot on the plan specifically dedicated for the use of children. It is 1/5 the size of the area dedicated for the use of dogs. On the West side the edge of the space is 5' away from the building and on the North side the edge of the space is 10' away from the building. The South side of the building in this location is the only part of the parking garage that is open to the outside air. Any fumes released from the garage will be released directly into the area where the playground is currently proposed.

There does not appear to be any shading from trees or otherwise to provide relief from direct sun on the playground. The South facing wall will absorb heat which will reflect into the playground and increase the temperature.

The location is as far away from the front entrance to the building as possible and how families living in the building will access the space is unclear.

In my opinion this is a bad location for a children's space. It feels like an afterthought and is squeezed between the tall building and the Ring Road. A better more generous location should be provided.

East of Building Across Ring Road:

East of the Building on the opposite side of the Ring Road there is a mixed paved and planted area of approximately 9,600 SF. Nothing on the plan indicates what activities are proposed for the various areas demarcated in this space. About 4640 SF of this space is labeled "Conservation Mix Turf Area". How is this turf area expected to be used by the residents, is it for walking/playing on or is it off limit to foot traffic? This questions should be answered as there is very little usable play scape on the property.

Lighting:

The Applicant has submitted a plan for outside lighting on the property entitled "Photometrics Site Plan" prepared by GWH Landscape Architects, dated 11-22-2021. The following are the proposed fixtures:

Lights on the building: There are 23 cut off lights mounted on the building (not sure at what elevation) spaced approximately 60 feet apart on every out side wall. Each of these light has a minimum Lumen Count of 3251 lumens for a total of 74,773 lumens. The proposed fixtures are listed as Dark Sky Compliant.

Decorative Post Lamps: There are three 12 foot tall Post Lamps shown on the plan (only 2 are called out in the chart). One is located near the Front Entrance to the property, one is halfway up the Entry Road (it appears to be in the same location as a proposed tree), the third post lamp is located on the North end of the East side open space near the Emergency Exit Road. The Lumen count for these fixtures is not listed but should be indicated on the plan. The Applicant should confirm that the fixtures are Dark Sky Compliant.

Sconces: There are 2 sconces listed on the lighting chart but three shown on the plan. There are two at the Front Entrance and one at the Garage Entrance. The fixture shown in the plan set is NOT Dark Sky Compliant and no Lumen Count is available.

Courtyard Lighting:

The plan proposes 4 Pairs of "moonlights" in the Courtyard. These are essentially Flood Lights. Each fixture produces between 780 to 2150 lumens for a total count ranging between 6,240 to 17,200 lumens. There is no mention of lighting for the pool, path lighting or lighting ant entry and exit doors to the courtyard.

Street Lighting:

The plan shows 11 single sided "Parking Lot Lights". These fixtures would be held on 20' tall poles. Each fixture would produce 26,400 lumens. Six single sided lights are proposed along the Entry Road, four fixtures are proposed on the Ring Road to the East side of the building, and one

is proposed for the South East corner of the ring road. The total proposed lumens for these fixtures are 290,400.

There are three double sided “Parking Lot Lights” proposed, also on the East side of the building, also on 20’ poles. Each of these fixtures would produce 52,800 lumens for a total of 158,400 lumens.

The applicant should confirm that these fixtures are Dark Sky Compliant. The total Street Lighting lumen count is 448,800.

Up Lights on Stone Pillars:

At the front of the site along South Avenue a wooden fence with three stone pillars is proposed. The lighting plan proposes to up light the pillars with the same flood light fixture as the “moon lighting in the courtyard. Used as up lights, these fixtures are not Dark Sky compliant. The lumen count for these fixtures is between 2,340 and 6,450. In my opinion these fixtures are not needed for the project.

Some other lighting requirements may not have been addressed in this plan such as code required lighting near entrance/exit doors to the building, etc.

The Town of Weston tries to maintain a “rural character” and encourages residents to reduce light pollution. While realizing this proposed development is much larger than a single family home, current Planning Board rules allow for only 22,000 Lumens of outside lighting for new homes that come before the Board. This development is proposing more than 996,000 lumens and we don’t even know the lumen values of several of the fixtures. The amount of outdoor lighting proposed for the site with out any ability to screen it from neighboring properties will have an adverse effect on neighbors. The lighting plan should be revisited by the Applicants for this reason.

Planting:

The Planting Plans shown in the plan set at this time are at a very Schematic level and lacking in critical details (number counts of specific plant types as well as proposed sizes at planting). The plans are using graphic symbols for different species of plants, not calling out the plants with letter symbols, so it is difficult to completely identify which plants are what especially at the 1”=50’ scale, but even at the 1”=20’ blow up area plans. Some of the symbols shown on the plans are not in the Legend presenting further confusion as to what is what on the plans.

For this aspect of the planting plans I suggest calling out the plants with letter symbols (for example “AS”- Acer saccharum) and quantities of each plant in each location and put the information into a Planting Schedule including: Quantity of each plant, Symbol shown on the plan, Botanic Name, Common Name, Size of plant to be supplied, and any other comments needed for description of the plant.

Several plant species on the list called “Proposed Species for Disturbed Wetland Buffer Areas” are upland species, not wetland species including: Sugar Maple, Acer saccharum; Red Oak,

Quercus rubra; Sweet Fern, Comptonia; Northern Bayberry, Myrica pensylvanica; and Little Bluestem, Schizachyrium scoparium.

The “Planting Notes” on the plans are very limited and not specific to actual planting needs of the project. The irrigation note will need to include the types of irrigation for different types of planting, also should meet the new proposals in the town for low water use. The mulch note should call out the type and depth of the proposed mulch for each type of planting bed. The seed or sod note should call out the seed/sod mix proposed. Other standard notes as to soil types to be used for planting, quality of trees to be used, planting guidelines and details, plant replacement and guarantees, etc. need to be included on future plans.

Planting Detail Sheets:

Even at the enlarged scale of 1”=20’ it is difficult to decipher some of the graphic symbols on the plans especially at the shrub and groundcover levels.

The Entry Drive planting plan is shown on Sheet L1.02. The plans show Platanus occidentalis, Sycamore trees at uneven spacing along the Entry Road. This is not considered a good “Street Tree”. It is known to drop leaves, twigs and fruit, it is susceptible to Anthracnose. It can grow to be 75 to 100’ tall and wide and will require regular maintenance pruning. Although it has an interesting Bark, the fall color is not beautiful. I am not saying that a few specimens wouldn’t be nice on site but not as the major tree along the Entry Road. There are other trees that may be a better fit for the Entry Road.

The current layout for this plan also does not provide any evergreen screening or buffer for the neighbors at 534 South Avenue from the Entry Road or the WWT Facility. There is an opportunity to provide a denser more layered planting/buffer with deciduous and evergreen Trees and shrubs once the Entry Road sweeps to the West past the WWT.

The planting along the West property line with 546 South Avenue could also be improved. This planting relies on Alaskan Cedar for screening. While, again a nice tree, it is looser in structure than some other possibilities such as Norway Spruce, Limber Pine, or White Fir and could be augmented or mixed in with other species for better coverage.

The North West corner of the property could also be more densely planted to pinch the view from South Avenue to the proposed buildings.

What is the purpose of the Wood Rail Fence in the North West corner?

Plantings shown below the Retaining walls on this plan and the other detail area plans are unrealistic. There is physically not enough room to fit root balls of any size between the toe of the wall and the property line. (Especially below the +/- 11 foot wall adjacent to 534 South Avenue) In some places the space shown between the two is under 3 feet wide.

Even in the few locations where there appears to be horizontal space for a root ball, the trees that appear to be specified in the locations are species that only reach a height of 15 feet or so and will provide no screening/buffer for the building above the wall.

Sheet L1.03 “Planting West”, actually shows the East side of the building, Shows proposed planting along the front of the building, around the building, the courtyard, and to the East of the building.

Because of the height of the building, Shadow studies should be conducted to ensure that the plants selected for the Courtyard and the Front of the building are located in areas with enough natural light for survival.

There is a 4 foot wide planting bed hard up against the face of the building on the North side, the main entrance to the building. This area will mostly be in shade and shade tolerant plants will be needed in this location.

There is another Retaining wall along the West property line below the Ring Road with a note calling out “Tall Evergreen Planting”. This is another location with a narrow planting space below a wall. It is unclear from the symbols on the plan which evergreens from the Legend are planned for this location but it does not look like they are the trees that will grow to any “tall” height.

The Courtyard will have serious sun and shadow issues. As noted earlier a sun/shade study should be done for the courtyard to help with the planting design. It is very difficult from the plan to decipher what plants are proposed for this area. It does appear the River Birches are proposed for the North end of the courtyard, these trees want to grow to be 50-70’ tall and will add to the lack of sunlight on the ground level of the courtyard. There appear to be planting beds in front of the entrances to the courtyard. There appear to be evergreen trees planted in front of windows of the adjacent dwelling units, most of the evergreens on the plant legend require full sun.

A Courtyard surrounded by a four story building is definitely a challenge when it comes to planting design. As this is one of the few public amenities for the residents this plan deserves a closer look and should call out the specific plants proposed to be planted in order to be better assessed.

The plans show a little more room for planting on the East side of the building. There is a 10’ planting bed between the building and the sidewalk at the dog runs. Again, it is difficult to understand exactly what plants, shrubs and groundcovers, are proposed for the foundation plantings. The “Street Trees” on this side of the property appear to be Red Maples which will work fine in this location. I would like clarification as to whether the proposed conservation turf area is usable for recreation purposes.

Sheet L1.04 Shows the Southern end of the building/property. This is the area where the Playground Equipment is located. It looks as if there are Catawba Rhododendrons planted between the play area and the seating area. These plants will cook in this location, but they also create a visual barrier between the play area and where parents may be sitting to watch their children. As I mentioned earlier in this report, this is just a bad location for a children’s playground. It should turn into a planting bed. Why not make the whole Back area into a more natural planting area? The triangle portion of the site below the 6’ tall retaining wall has few trees and is called out to be planted with sod. How are mowers going to get to this area for

maintenance and why should they bother as planting more trees could help to buffer the building further from neighboring properties?

Conclusions:

The scale of the project as designed is too large for the site. The building and roadways take up most of the site. There is very little existing vegetation proposed to remain on the site except for in the protected wetlands. The building and Ring Road are too close to the property lines and do not allow room for buffer planting and screening to mitigate the 4 to 5 story building from the abutting neighbors. The retaining walls required to make the site work for the current design are too tall in places and too close to the property lines.

Circulation on the site needs to be improved to allow for safe boarding of School Buses by children and reduce possible bottle necking in traffic between delivery trucks and entering and exiting vehicles.

In a car-centric neighborhood there are not enough parking spaces per unit and no extra parking for visitors and employees.

There are not enough safe outdoor spaces for children and families to recreate. Pedestrian circulation on site and between the site and the town could be improved.

The Planting Plans need to be more clear and specific. Sizes and quantities of proposed plants should be included on the plan. Buffering between neighbors should be improved. Shade studies are needed for the courtyard and front of the building to improve plants choices for survival.

The Lighting Plan should indicate the Lumen value of the proposed fixtures so as to fully evaluate the impact on the neighborhood. Also the plan should go into more detail as to other lighting that may be required by code.

Respectfully submitted,
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