

United  
Consultants, Inc.  
850 Franklin Street Suite 11D  
Wrentham, MA 02093  
508-384-6560 FAX 508-384-6566

September 25, 2023

Mr. Gregory Rondeau, Chairman  
Franklin Planning Board  
and  
Mr. Jeffrey Livingstone, Chairman  
Franklin Conservation Commission  
355 East Central Street  
Franklin, MA 02038

**Re: 122 – 138 East Central Street  
Site Plan Peer Review**

Mr. Chairman and Board Members,

On behalf of the owner, 138 East Central Street, LLC, we have provided a summary of the following comments from The Town Engineer, Town Planner and BETA Group, Inc. BETA Group, Inc. has provided review comments for the Planning Board as well as the Conservation Commission. We have also provided comments received from the Town of Franklin Planning Board and Conservation Commissions at the public hearings. Our responses are immediately following each comment and they have been italicized.

**Town Engineer**

1. Applications that will need to be filed with the Franklin Department of Public Works may include, but are not necessarily limited to Right-of-Way Excavation and Trench Permits.

*The applicant will file for and obtain all necessary permits from the Department of Public Works.*

2. It is unclear if these two lots are to be combined into a single lot as part of this project.

*The lots are not proposed to be combined.*

3. There appears to be an existing gravel access driveway between #118 and #122 East Central St. It should be noted if and how this access will be closed off.

*We have added curb bumpers to the spaces in this area which will prohibit access to the gravel drive.*

4. The applicant should provide a calculation indicating the net increase or decrease in impervious coverage on the site.

*The existing and proposed lot coverage square footages have been added to sheet 4.*

5. A calculation should also be provided showing the underground storage system is able to drain within 72 hours.

*Details have been added to the pond which includes the removal of fill soils and the installation of sand.*

6. We note that an oil and grease trap is shown, presumably for an interior floor drain. This work should be coordinated with the Building Department.

*The applicant will coordinate the floor drain and grease trap installation with the Building Department and the Plumbing Inspector.*

### **Town Planner**

1. Applicant should provide all structures within 300 feet of the site.

*The structures have been added to the locus map on sheet 1.*

2. Applicant should show the main entrance and any other entrances to the building.

*Person Doors (PD1 through PD4) have been labeled on sheets 3 - 5.*

3. Provide an area(s) for snow storage.

*Snow storage areas have been labeled on sheet 5.*

4. Per section 185-31.C(3)(j)-provide location, size and sketch of all proposed signs.

*A location for a sign has been shown along the East Central Street frontage area. No signs are proposed at this time.*

5. Per section 185-31.C(3)(k)- provide a complete planting plan, including existing vegetation and proposed plantings for the entire site.

*The exiting vegetation and proposed plantings can be found on sheet 5. There are existing evergreens located along the westerly boundary of the site and the 33 Cross Street property. The underbrush locate at the south west portion of the site have been labeled. Notes have been added to remove the invasive species and proposed tree plantings have been provided on sheet 5.*

### **BETA Group, Inc - Planning Board**

G1. The proposed grades across the parking lot are steep. Parking lot grades are normally limited to 3.0% as a maximum. On this site, the grade across space nos. 8 & 9 is 6.5% and the slope across spaces 10-20 range from 4-5.5%. At this grade, opening a door or controlling a car door being opened on the down gradient side is difficult.

*The site has been re-graded to provide a slope of 4% at the parking space areas.*

### **ZONING**

The Site is located within the Commercial 1 Zoning District. The proposed development is to convert the existing dwelling at 122 East Central Street into a duplex and maintain a commercial use in the structure at 138 East Central Street. A 1,200 sq. ft. addition will be made to the existing building at 138 East Central Street which will expand the building footprint from 5,490 sq. ft. 6,696 sq. ft. Overall, the gross

floor space in the building will be 8,446 sq. ft. including the 2nd floor space. The proposed addition will be located 10.6' from the side lot line which is in compliance with the side yard minimum setback of 10'.

#### SCHEDULE OF LOT, AREA, FRONTAGE, YARD AND HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS (§185 ATTACHMENT 9)

The Site meets the requirements for lot area, depth, frontage, width; front and side yards; building height; and impervious coverage. Neither the dwelling at 122 East Central Street nor the existing commercial structure at 138 East Central Street meet the requirements for front, and side yard setbacks from the property line; however, these are existing nonconformities. For the commercial building, the minimum setback from the sideline which is the limits of the Single-Family IV zone is 20'. The building is setback 14' from this sideline and thus is nonconforming at this point.

#### PARKING, LOADING AND DRIVEWAY REQUIREMENTS (§185-21)

Existing access to the Site is via two curb cuts along East Central Street and a driveway opening in Cross Street at the rear of the commercial structure. The access from East Central Street will be reduced to a single curb opening between the buildings. The driveway opening on Cross Street will be maintained and continue to provide access to the garage doors at the rear of the building at 138 East Central Street. The existing pavement area at 122 East Central will provide all the parking spaces needed for the use.

A total of 25 parking spaces will be provided on the west side of the 138 East Central Street structure. The proposed spaces will generally be maintained within the limits of the existing edge of pavement with only minor expansion directly behind the dwelling at 122. Two of these parking spaces are designed to be accessible, 1 of which is van accessible. Typical parking spaces are 9 feet wide and 19 feet long. Driveway widths are a minimum of 24 feet wide. A narrow-paved access lane (10' wide) west of the building at 138 East Central will be maintained between the commercial building and the adjacent residential parcel.

Parking requirements defined by the Zoning Bylaw are for Commercial Uses, 1 space is required per 500 sq. ft. of gross floor area; for Residential use 1.5 spaces are required per unit. The areas provided in the parking requirement summary result in a total required parking space count of 20 spaces.

P1. In accordance with §185-21.C(5) of the bylaws, "Parking lots for 20 or more cars shall contain or be bordered within five feet by at least one tree per 10 parking spaces,...." For the proposed 25 spaces this would equate to 3 trees. The proposed 3 trees are shown on sheet 5 of 7.

*Agreed. No comment.*

P2. In accordance with §185-21.C(4), (4) Loading areas and parking areas for 10 or more cars shall provide screening in accordance with § 185-35. See L1 below.

*See response in L1 below.*

P3. On the north side of the building at 138 East Central Street, the existing paved surfaces are being maintained. There is an AUL (Activity and Use Limitation) on the abutting parcel. The applicant should note if the AUL applies to this site and what will be the use of the paved area.

*The abutting properties AUL is shown on the site plan and the reference to the plan of land has been provided.*

## SIDEWALKS (§185-28)

No public sidewalks are proposed under this project. There are sidewalks along the frontage on both East Central Street and Cross street. A concrete sidewalk from the commercial building will be extended to the sidewalk on East Central Street.

## CURBING (§185-29)

C1. There is no curbing proposed at the rear of the parking lot.

*A stone trench has been added to provide capture of the parking area sheet flow stormwater.*

## SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW (§185-31)

The project has been submitted for Site Plan Review and is required to conform to the requirements of this section. The proposed lighting plan shows that the only lighting will be mounted on the face of the 2 buildings facing the parking lot. These will effectively light the driveway entrance from East Central Street and the face of the building at 138 East Central Street. There will be some minor spillage onto East Central Street at the driveway entrance and along the sidewalk.

SP1. Based on the proximity of the site to the abutting residential uses, BETA recommends that information regarding any potential noise sources associated with the proposed renovations be provided to the Board for their review.

*The proposed uses of the property are expected to be office and retail type uses. No noise issues are anticipated.*

SP2. As previously noted, there will be some minor spillage of light beyond the property line along East Central Street. The waiver from §185-31(4)(e) should be requested.

*The applicant has requested a waiver.*

## SCREENING (§185-35)

The project proposes outdoor parking for 10 or more cars as well as loading docks which must be screened in accordance with this section. Residential districts are located to the south of the Site along Cross Street. Residences are present in these areas, though existing vegetation may partially obstruct visibility of the Site.

L1. There is no screening proposed at the rear of the parking lot, and based on aerial imagery, it does not appear that the existing vegetation in this area is thick enough to screen the area. In addition, the edge of the pavement along this property line ranges from 2.5-5.0'. In accordance with the bylaws, this screen should be a minimum width of 4' and densely planted.

*A six foot high white vinyl fence has been added to the rear property boundary (33 and 37 Cross Street properties). Existing evergreen plantings are located along the westerly property boundary of 33 Cross Street.*

## UTILITIES

All existing utilities will be retained. Detailed review of utilities is anticipated to be provided by the DPW and Fire Chief, as applicable.

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The overall impervious surface coverage across the site will be reduced, thus the proposed redevelopment will result in a reduction in peak flow rates and volumes off site into the wetlands at the southwest corner of the parcel. The plans show that there will be 4,014 sq. ft. of pavement removed and 885 sq. ft. of pavement added. The total reduction in the impervious surfaces on site will be 3,129 sq. ft. from the existing 27,150+ sq. ft. to 24,020+ sq. ft. The overall site is less than 1.0 acre, thus it is not subject to the requirements of the bylaws. However, it is subject to the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards and will be reviewed accordingly. The applicant is proposing a subsurface infiltration system that will accept and infiltrate the roof runoff from the structure at 138 East Central Street.

## GENERAL

SW1. The soil logs do not indicate the presence of any redox features, nor is the C layer beneath the proposed infiltration system identified. BETA recommends that a frimpter adjustment be applied to the actual water table to determine ESHGW and document that the system will be 2' above Estimated Seasonal High Groundwater.

*The drainage system has been revised to include additional septic sand installation below the system.*

SW2. Based upon the details provided, the infiltration system has 1,590 cu. ft. of storage capability which is the equivalent of 2.85" of runoff from the roof area (6,696 sq. ft.). The system will provide the equivalent storage volume of 0.6" from the total impervious surfaces on site.

*Agreed. No comment.*

SW3. There are no proposed improvements at the southwest corner of the site adjacent to the wetlands. BETA recommends that the design be reviewed to determine if there are options available to provide stormwater treatment along the southwest edge of the parking lot.

*A stone trench has been added to the site plans. See sheets 4 for the location and sheet for the detail.*

## **BETA Conservation Commission Review Comments**

A1. The project was filed under the Bylaw only; therefore, no DEP file number has been issued.

*Agreed. No comment.*

A2. The plan should be revised to include a note stating the sources(s) of the wetland delineation.

*A note has been added to sheet 4.*

W1. BETA concurs with the boundary of the IVW as delineated by the Applicant, Although upland vegetation such as Japanese knotweed was observed within the IVW, a dominance of hydrologic vegetation including silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*) and jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) was observed. Hydric soils consisting of a saturated, sandy/gravelly soil with redoximorphic concentration near the surface were observed. BETA observed that uplands within approximately 2-5 feet of the delineated boundary consisted of pavement underneath 2-5 inches of soil. Vegetation with shallow root systems including Japanese knotweed has vegetated these areas.

*Agreed. No comment.*

W2. BETA Concurs with the determination that the IVW is isolated due to there being not observable surficial hydrologic connections to waterbodies or waterways.

*Agreed. No comment.*

W3. Inlet protection measures should be provided for the existing catch basins within the public right-of-way.  
*A note has been added to install silt saks at catch basins x-1 and x-2.*

W4. Depict the location of the laydown and/or stockpile areas on the Project plans. These areas should be sited outside of the Buffer Zone to the extent feasible.  
*A laydown and stockpile area has been added to sheet 5.*

W5. The applicant should clarify if onsite populations of invasive plant species will be disturbed and require the use of best management practices (BMPs) during construction to prevent the spread of the invasive species. While eradication is likely outside the scope of work, BMP's to limit spread of viable seeds and rhizomes should be provided if determined to be appropriate.  
*A protocol has been added to sheet 5.*

W6. Due to the widespread "Dutch Elm Disease" BETA recommends replacing the proposed American elm (*Ulmus Americana*) with an alternative native species.  
*The proposed tree was changed to a Red Maple on sheet 5.*

W7. The applicant should provide details on whether areas where pavement is removed will become turf lawn or if the application of native wildflower seed (or similar) could be proposed. While many of these areas are outside of Conservation Commission jurisdictional, any jurisdictional areas should be assessed for the possibility of establishing additional native plantings.  
*A note to provide wildflower planting has been added to sheet 5.*

W8. The applicant should provide a Construction Schedule and Sequence in the plan notes (Bylaw Section 7.15.1)  
*A construction sequence has been added to sheet 5.*

W9. The applicant should provide clarification on the purpose of the variance request; it is assumed that this was submitted due to work within the 25-foot No Disturb Zone.  
*The variance request was provided for work within the previously disturbed 25-foot No Disturb Zone.*

W10. Per Bylaw Section 4.3.2, the site consist of areas disturbed prior to June 29, 2006; therefore impervious areas and structures within the 25 to 50-foot buffer zone may be permitted at the Commissions discretion.  
*The applicant is proposing the removal of areas of pavement and to pave within the 25 to 50- buffer zone.*

W11. Due to the Applicant requesting a Variance, an Alternatives Analysis must be provided (Bylaw Section 7.13.1) The current Alternatives Analysis does not comply with the requirements outlined in 310 CMR 10.58(4) as referenced in the Bylaw under Section 7.13.1 The Alternative Analysis should be revised to discuss alternatives that could result in additional improvements to the 25-foot No Disturb Zone including further reductions in paved areas and an increase in vegetated areas, if practicable.  
*Discuss Alternatives Analysis and revisions.*

W12. BETA defers to the Commission if additional mitigation offsets (e.g. further reductions in impervious area or installation of additional plantings) are required per Bylaw Section 4.4.1 due to more that 30% of the Buffer Zone being impervious. Existing pavement was observed in these areas during construction.  
*To provide mitigation, the applicant has proposed to remove paving in close proximity to the IVW and to apply loam and plant the area with a wildflower mix.*

W13. The applicant should provide a formal Vernal Pool Statement. (Bylaw Section 7.7)

*A statement has been added to sheet 4.*

W14. BETA recognizes that the site is not subject to the Massachusetts Stormwater Management Regulations due to the lack of Act jurisdiction. However, Section 4.3.1 of the Bylaw states that the Commission may condition the Applicant to use BMP's for stormwater management consistent with the most recent version of the Town of Franklin Best Development Practice Guidebook. It is BETA's understanding that the project is currently under concurrent review with the Planning Board, inclusive of stormwater management.

*That is correct.*

*The plans have been revised to include a stone treatment at the edge of the proposed pavement. Refer to sheet 4 for the location.*

#### Planning Board Comments

1. Drive through area between handicap space and 33 Cross Street.

*A bollard has been added in this area.*

2. Spaces 21 - 25 add curb stops.

*Curb stops have been added to spaces 21 - 25.*

3. Dedicated parking for the 2 residential units.

*Parking spaces 8, 8 and 21 have been dedicated as the residential parking spaces. Signs have been proposed and a note has been added to sheet 3.*

4. Fenced in area on east side of building.

*The fence was installed to prevent vehicles from traversing the property.*

We look forward to meeting with the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission to discuss this project further.

Thank you in advance.



Richard Goodreau  
Project Manager