

Department of Planning and Zoning

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MEMORANDUM

To: Design Advisory Board

From: Mary O'Neil, AICP, Principal Planner

Date: January 12, 2016

RE: ZP16-0746SP, Sketch Plan Review for 66, 72, 80, 94 and 96 Colchester Avenue; 27 and 49 Fletcher Place

Note: These are staff comments only. Decisions on projects are made by the Development Review Board, which may approve, deny, table or modify any project. THE APPLICANT OR REPRESENTATIVE MUST ATTEND THE MEETING.

File: ZP16-0746SP

Location: 66, 72, 80, and 94 Colchester Avenue; 27 and (a portion of) 49 Fletcher Place

Zone: Institutional **Ward:** 1E

Date application accepted:

December 24, 2015

Applicant/ Owner: Randall Miller and Francis J. VonTurkovich (49 Fletcher Place owned by Nancy Reid, 96 Colchester owned by Dr. Patrick Clifford.)

Request: New three story residential buildings (2) with underground and surface parking.

Background:

66 Colchester Avenue

- **ZP16-0393SP**, Sketch Plan Review by DRB, November 4, 2015.
- **Zoning Permit 87-853**; construct 250 sf. addition to



rear of existing office use, provide one additional parking space. (5 + 1 = 6) Approved May 1988.

- **Zoning Permit**, install a 2' x 24' drain trough on the west side of the building. June 1974.
- **Zoning Permit**; convert property to a dental office. Five paved parking spaces. January 1961.

72 Colchester Avenue

- **ZP16-0393SP**, Sketch Plan Review by DRB, November 4, 2015.
- **ZP15-0896SP**, Sketch Plan Review by DRB, April 21, 2015.
- **CU-97-050**; Housing replacement exemption. Approved with conditions March 1997.
- **Zoning Permit 89-051 / COA 89-013**; construct 18' x 20' second story addition on rear of existing single family home, no change to site plan. Approved February 27, 1989.

80 Colchester Avenue

- **ZP16-0393SP**, Sketch Plan Review by DRB, November 4, 2015.
- **ZP 15-0896SP**, Sketch Plan Review by DRB, construct 79 apartment units in 3 story building with underground and above-ground parking facilities, April 2015.
- **Zoning Permit 15-0390SN**; install new freestanding sign for Hillel. Approved October, 2014.
- **Zoning Permit 15-0042CA/CU**, change of use from office to membership club; exterior staircase and install bike rack. Approved August 2014.
- **Zoning Permit CU 2004-016**; application for use by UVM affiliated Center for Children, Youth and Families Administrative offices. Approved with conditions, January 2004.
- **Zoning Permit 01-389**; installation of an externally illuminated freestanding sign for the existing medical (chiropractic) office. Approved April 2001; not pick up and confirmed expired in 2011.
- **Zoning Permit CU 2001-035**; change of use of first floor space from office to medical chiropractic office. Removed from agenda as determined that the proposed conversion from a medical billing office to a chiropractic office on the first floor does not require conditional use review. February 2001.
- **Zoning Permit 00-516**; refurbish existing side porch to allow ramping of deck for handicapped accessibility to the existing medical office. No increase in footprint. December, 2000.
- **Zoning Permit 99-277**; removal of slate roofing material, replacing with asphalt shingles for the existing medical office. Approved December 1998.
- **Zoning Permit 92-123**; construction of ten additional parking spaces for a total of sixteen for the existing medical office and residential unit. Existing curb cut to be eliminated, with joint use of adjacent property's (medical office / 94 Colchester Avenue) curb cut. Approved September 1991.

- **Zoning Permit CU92-011 / COA 92-025;** eliminate curb cut and driveway from #80 and utilize widened drive at traffic light at #94. Remove existing garage, change configuration and size of paved parking area. No change to use of #80 as office and apartment. Approved with conditions September 1991.
- **Request for Conditional Use Permit** to construct a private parking lot. July 1990. Application withdrawn by applicant.
- Notice of appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment seeking a special exception to erect a 16' x 16' addition to the northeast corner of existing doctor's office. Approved July 1968.

94 Colchester Avenue

- **ZP16-0393SP**, Sketch Plan Review by DRB, November 4, 2015.
- **ZP 15-0896SP**, Sketch Plan Review by DRB , construct 79 apartment units in 3 story building with underground and above-ground parking facilities, April 2015.
- **Non-Applicability of Zoning Permit Requirements 07-703NA;** replace asphalt shingle roof with same. May 2007.
- **Zoning Permit 92-025;** site changes for combined access with #80. See above. Approved September 1991.
- **Zoning Permit 91-154;** remove two windows and one door from north elevation and install three windows on same side. No change in use. See 89-012. October 1990.
- **Zoning Permit 89-042 / COA 89-012?** (illegible); replace existing vestibule, new siding and windows, new walkways and landscaping. February 1989.
- **Zoning Permit 780073;** erect an 18' x 30 addition in rear of existing building. June 1977.
- **Zoning Permit;** desire to rent portion of premises for doctor's office. Approved May 1963.

27 Fletcher Place

- **ZP16-0393SP**, Sketch Plan Review by DRB, November 4, 2015.
- **ZP 15-0896SP**, Sketch Plan Review by DRB, construct 79 apartment units in 3 story building with underground and above-ground parking facilities, April 2015.
- **Non-Applicability of Zoning Permit Requirements 15-0959NA;** Install dryer hookups on 2nd floor. Upgrade wiring to meet code. Upgrade plumbing to meet code. April, 2015.
- **Zoning Permit 15-0955CA;** Change of use from single family residential to duplex, modify two existing windows, and create new parking spaces. Approved June 2015; currently under appeal with VSCED.
- **Zoning Permit 81-684;** replace 26" x 26" double hung window with Anderson window 24" x 48". September 1981.
- **Notice of Appeal to Zoning Board of Adjustment;** erect a carport within three feet of the property line. Approved December 1968.

49 Fletcher Place is incorporated to illustrate that the project would include a potential boundary line adjustment; reserving a single family home on individual lot. The applicants' have not as yet indicated the lot size, but it appears to be substantially more than a minimum lot size of 4,000 sf. The remainder of the parcel would be absorbed into the PUD.

Overview: Contiguous property owners propose a collective development of seven (whole or in part) lots, allowing for utilization of large rear/interior area for new housing. This is the third Sketch Plan Review of the proposed Planned Unit Development.

A previous narrative submitted 10/28/2015 suggested that 66 and 96 Colchester Avenue are *not* part of the PUD, but will have easements allowing circulation/parking. The Master Plan submitted with the sketch plan application includes those parcels as part of vehicular circulation and parking redevelopment. They must, in fact, be included as part of the PUD review if they are functionally contributing to the site redevelopment, although they do not need to merge lots to do so. Setback compliance along the periphery will continue to be required per Article 11.

The combined parcel size is 3.62 acres, fronting on both Fletcher Place and Colchester Avenue. The applicant has excluded the 96 Colchester Avenue parcel for purposes of counting unit/density; but inclusion is appropriate given the proposed site development proposed as part of the PUD.

Two connected buildings with an as-yet undetermined number of residential units is proposed, with both surface and underground parking. All existing, street-facing structures are proposed to be retained. Access for the interior of the site is intended to be organized at the traffic signal at UVM Medical Center, with another ingress/egress further west at an existing driveway between 66 and 72 Colchester Avenue. Vehicular circulation is proposed to be enhanced, allowing shared use of internal roadways/parking and access for all existing and proposes uses to the traffic signal onto Colchester Avenue.

It would be helpful if an "existing conditions" site plan were submitted to help inform board members and staff of the location of current property boundaries.

As there are existing structures on each of these lots, the project will be reviewed as a Planned Unit Development.



Article 5: Citywide General Regulations

Section 5.4.8 Historic Buildings and Sites

72, 80, and 94 Colchester Avenue, as well as 27 Fletcher Place are all listed on the Vermont State Register of Historic Resources. As the development is proposed for the interior of these combined parcels, the most significant concern may be that of compatibility, particularly in regard to massing and proportion.

(b) Standards and Guidelines:

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.

Each of these resources was constructed as a residential dwelling, with the exception of 94 Colchester Avenue which was constructed as an office c. 1960. The addition of new housing, in the rear of these combined parcels, will not require the alteration of the historic or current use of each structure.

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.

No alterations to the structures have been suggested to 66, 72, 80, 94 or 96 Colchester Avenue, 27 or 49 Fletcher Place. The roadway that is proposed to be the principle entrance to the development between 80 and 94 Colchester Avenue is currently an access to a parking area. Similarly, the driveway that separates 66 and 72 Colchester Avenue currently exists, but logically will experience a much greater intensity of use with this plan. The most significant change will be the introduction of a large connected residential structure in the rear of the assembled lots. The structure will occupy a good portion of the open space behind these older structures, and introduce a building of a larger scale and mass than is in evidence on the north side of Colchester Avenue or Fletcher Place.

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.

There is no proposal for conjectural features on any of the subject properties.

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

For Sketch Plan, there has been no inclusion of alteration to the existing historic properties.

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

No changes to features or finishes are proposed.

6. 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.

No replacement of historic features is proposed.

7. 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 are proposed for the historic buildings.

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

As noted.

9. 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.

Spatial relationships will be altered in that these included properties will no longer have the spacious rear yards that currently exist. As an example of modern infill, the project provides an opportunity to examine new housing that might be attractive, functional, and compatible with the existing residential buildings. Other historic examples of residential development off Colchester Avenue would be Nash Place, Thibault Parkway, and even Fletcher Place itself.

As typical of urban development, the growing city utilized open area tangent to a major thoroughfares to expand residential opportunities; but each successfully created a nucleus neighborhood that was independent of, but related to neighboring development. This proposal seeks to introduce a residential nucleus within a collection of existing buildings.

By both building elevation and footprint studies, it is evident that the proposed residential building(s) will be of substantially greater footprint and massing than any of the existing buildings that line the north side of Colchester Avenue or Fletcher Place. Although materials have not as yet been defined, the building(s) are clearly differentiated from the existing historic buildings in their massing, design, arrangement, proportion, features, and scale. The distance from the public street helps ease the transition while preserving the character of the existing buildings.

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.

It would be possible to consider the removal of a single large detached structure, so the project may be considered to be reversible.

Article 6: Development Review Standards

Part 1, Land Division Design Standards

Section 6.1.2 Review Standards

An existing conditions site plan, with property boundaries will be essential in understanding which lots are proposed to be merged. Four lots appear to remain individual parcels (66, 94 and 96 Colchester Avenue, 49 Fletcher Place), but permanently encumbered to the PUD. 49 Fletcher Place will require a boundary line adjustment to annex the easterly land to this plan. A boundary line adjustment will be required simultaneous with the PUD if it goes forward.

While a survey is not required at preliminary plat, the preliminary plans must nonetheless show exact boundary lines. A boundary survey by a VT licensed land surveyor must be provided prior to final plat review.

Part 2, Site Plan Design Standards

Section 6.2.2 Review Standards

(a) Protection of important natural features

There is a significant ravine to the north of the site, which the project development avoids. The proposal intends to incorporate grade changes to facilitate underground parking for the new residential building.

(b) Topographical alterations

Any specific methods to alter the terrain to accommodate the plan will need to be illustrated.

(c) Protection of important public views

There are no important public views from or through the property.

(d) Protection of important cultural resources

See Section 5.4.8 (b).

(e) Supporting the use of alternative energy

Submitted plans show an expansive solar installation proposed for Building 1. This would be encouraged.

(f) Brownfield sites

None of the properties are listed on the Vermont DEC Hazardous Waste Site.

(g) Provide for nature's events

A Stormwater Management plan, approved by the City Stormwater team will be required. Details for the proposed stormwater management system will be required prior to final plat approval.

A comprehensive erosion prevention and sediment control plan will be required at the time of application. As with the stormwater management, final details will be required prior to final plat approval.

No specific areas for snow storage have been identified on the site. This will be a requirement.

(h) Building location and orientation

The visible public streetscape along Colchester Avenue is an important component; however, equally important is the establishment of a well-defined built environment, functional open spaces, and interconnectivity between the new dwellings and the existing streetscape/sidewalks that connect physically and visually to Colchester Avenue and on a lesser note, Fletcher Place. The site plan has again been redesigned to create and orient a primary façade to front Colchester Avenue. A pedestrian way and crosswalk to Colchester Avenue are illustrated on the plan, emerging between 72 and 80 Colchester Avenue. The northerly building (Building #2) should be connected by pedestrian path to Colchester Avenue as well. The site plan does not support that.

Open space or common land is required as part of Article 11.

The CDO and Municipal Development Plan articulate a vision for vibrant city neighborhoods with a fabric of cohesive streetscapes and call for new neighborhoods to reflect this vision. The proposed development ambitiously attempts to reach density allowances on a unique plan to utilize undeveloped rear yards. Redesign has the potential to effectively introduce a significant number of new residential units in a manner that is setback from the existing street-fronting structures. In this plan, the existing streetscape is nearly untouched, and development is reserved to the inner areas of the collected sites.

(i) Vehicular access

Access to this inner site is proposed directly across from the UVM Medical Center, intending to utilize the existing traffic light. That access will allow use of existing interior parking (and current informal interconnections) behind 66, 72, 80, 94 and 96 Colchester Avenue. The secondary avenue next to 66 Colchester Avenue is the direct path to the underground parking proposed for the new residential buildings. It is somewhat concerning that the major interior circulation path occurs at the primary building entrance fronting Colchester Avenue, introducing a vulnerability to pedestrian safety.

Traffic flow will require examination to assure effective vehicular ingress and egress, provide adequate access to the underground parking garage, and assure safety for residents and other pedestrians using all seven sites.

(j) Pedestrian access

Sidewalks connect directly to those on Colchester Avenue, linking the public sidewalk system to the proposed new residential buildings. It is not clear how a sidewalk could be proposed westward from the rear residential building as it appears that the grade change would prevent pedestrian access to the proposed underground garage entrance. The redesigned site plan shows a width pedestrian promenade from Colchester Avenue to the new building; something recommended in prior Sketch Plan reviews. Unfortunately, this entrance is located at the vehicular circulation path to the parking garage, so frequent conflicts with pedestrians may be anticipated.

There is no clearly articulated pedestrian path between the building and the surface parking areas east. For pedestrian safety, some separation between vehicular and pedestrians will need to be defined.

Additionally, the southerly entrance door from Building #2 has no connection to the pedestrian walkway, as viewed on plan SP1. This is an obvious necessity.

(k) Accessibility for the handicapped

The project will have to meet ADA standards, as directed by the building inspector. An elevator, proposed for the southeast corner of Building #1, is proposed to serve both buildings. H/C parking will be required, with identification, signage and access area. These appear to be suggested on Plan A101, but will need confirmation. Additionally ADA parking spaces should be included on surface lots, particularly as some of the parking will be dedicated to the existing medical offices fronting Colchester Avenue.

This should be more fully developed at the time of final application review.

(l) Parking and circulation

Parking is proposed under the building and on surface parking. The applicant will be obliged to meet the parking requirements of Table 8.1.8-1 of the CDO. The parking requirement for multi-unit attached dwellings in the Shared Use Parking District is 1/unit.

The redevelopment proposes a significant amount of paved circulation and surface parking, which is recommended to be minimized.

Circulation is proposed via an access drive at the traffic light on Colchester Avenue; proceeding to an awkward intersection that leads via a circuitous route to a surface parking area. A counter-clockwise traffic pattern will lead drivers back out to the light, or turn right; crossing in front of the main pedestrian entrance of Building #1 and proceed toward a another intersection that will require either a right turn toward the underground parking area, or a left turn to exit onto Colchester Avenue. In plan, the traffic circulation is somewhat confusing and will require significant signage to direct drivers about and through the site.

As circulation pathes and parking cross property boundaries and are recipricolly dependent, 66 and 96 Colchester Avenue will be required to be included as part of the Planned Unit Development. Development of the overall site rely heavily on the parking and circulation lanes on those lots; both of which are proposed to have significant site re-arrangement and construction to facilitate the plan.

It is noted that if 96 Colchester Avenue is *not* among the assemblage of parcels within the PUD, the main access drive/parking plan as limited does not work.

(m) Landscaping and fences

There is not enough information available at Sketch Plan to evaluate landscaping. A full landscaping plan will be required at the time of formal application.

(n) Public plazas and open space

While there are no formal public plazas included in the plan, it is appropriate to evaluate the availability of open space available for residents. North of the development site is unreceptive for open space amenities due to the challenging topography. An open area behind 27 Fletcher Place has been proposed to be utilized for a community garden. Area for picnic tables, clothes lines, or play areas dedicated to the enjoyment of the residents is further encouraged. Further exploration of similar opportunities is encouraged and will in fact be required, per Article 11.

(o) Outdoor lighting

Not enough information has been submitted to evaluate lighting under this sketch plan review. A full lighting plan, including photometric and fixture information, will be required at the time of final application.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design

On-site utilities need to be undergrounded for new construction. Meters, utility connections, HVAC or similar mechanical equipment should be coordinated with the design of the building, and grouped in a service court out of public view. All need to be illustrated on elevations and/or site plans to determine appropriateness of location and necessity of screening.

The proposed location of a dumpster appears awkward, given the immediate proximity of underground garage entrance and the required path of a trash hauler to access the structure. It would be vastly preferable to integrate trash and recycling operations within the building rather than as a stand-alone. Any dumpster will be required to be enclosed on all four sides to prevent blowing trash; and must be screened from public view. Such enclosure, (if the trash is not relocated to the interior of the building) must have a defined plan at the time of submittal.

Part 3, Architectural Design Standards

Section 6.3.2 Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment:

1. Massing, Height and Scale:

Where architectural styles or materials may vary within a streetscape, proposed development shall maintain an overall scale similar to that of surrounding buildings, or provide a sensitive transition, where appropriate, to development of a dissimilar scale.

The buildings lining the north side of Colchester Avenue are largely representative of 19th century residential architecture: 66, 72 (1814) and 80 from the earlier part of the century, and 96 (1904) early 20th century. 96 Colchester Avenue and 27 Fletcher Place are both representative examples of American Four-Square; 2 stories with roof dormers. 94 represents some more modern infill (1960.) Of the five on Colchester Avenue, only 96 exceeds 2 stories. The proposed buildings will be three stories over a parking deck which will have an entry exposure.

The existing structures behind which this building is proposed are 1-2 ½ stories; typical for the residential style buildings on the north side of Colchester Avenue and the west side of Fletcher Place. At three full stories the proposed connected buildings have the potential to be significantly higher than the existing buildings that ring it; however modeling studies may alter that perspective, particularly as visible from the public right-of-way. The grade changes toward the north of the site; modeling studies may better illustrate the scale of the new buildings in comparison to the existing structures as viewed from the street.

Distance between the existing buildings and the proposed buildings act as a transitional element, easing the shift in height.

Buildings should maintain consistent massing and perceived building height at the street level, regardless of the overall bulk or height of the building. Buildings should maintain a relationship to the human scale through the use of architectural elements, variations of proportions and materials, and surface articulations. Large expanses of undifferentiated building wall along the public street or sidewalk shall be avoided. The apparent mass and scale of buildings shall be broken into smaller parts by articulating separate volume reflecting existing patterns in the streetscape, and should be proportioned to appear more vertical than horizontal in order to avoid monotonous repetition.

It is difficult to predict the perceived building height from the street level, as the buildings will be set back considerably from both Colchester Avenue and Fletcher Place.

The building facades are generously articulated with differing planes, building openings, materials, and window arrangement. There are no large expanses of undifferentiated walls.

The north and south building elevations of Building #2 are systematically regular and prescribed; however they will be less visible to anyone but occupants. The east/west elevations (Plan A201) better illustrate the variation of materials, fenestration, and massing; however there appears little relationship between the joined buildings; the physical connection lacking any further advantage than a functional joint between building masses. The result is the appearance of a large connected vertical building, rather than a natural riff that plays off existing building patterns and volumes, as directed by this standard. The similarity between the new buildings is limited to their mass; differentiation afterward is through the variation in window and bay arrangement, materials, and surface organization.



1. Roofs and Rooflines

Flat roofs are proposed for both buildings, with small pavilion-style projections that stand proud of the roofline. The nearest flat-roofed buildings are associated with the Trinity College Campus, further east on Colchester Avenue; and those of the UVM Medical Center.

2. Building Openings

Building #1 has a strong primary entrance facing the newly introduced promenade to Colchester Avenue. Although it features a unique, canted primary window with flat roof canopy, in arrangement it resembles some of the more modern building faces in Burlington, and not unlike

Delehanty Hall at nearby Trinity, Ohavi Zedek on North Prospect Street or a portion of the primary elevation of the Fletcher Free Library. Windows on secondary elevations are larged and arranged in rhythmic groups, common to Collegiate style elementary school building design.

Building #2 has a different arrangement and style for windows openings; alternating between frameless bays for studio apartments and columns of singly arranged windows, which appear to be set in extruded window frames. If imagery is correct, they may be similar to the windows at UVM's Jeffords Building.

The entrances to Building #2 are within the connector, and on a south elevation. Oddly this door does not connect to the pedestrian walkway, as illustrated on the site plan SP1.



(b) Protection of important architectural resources

See Section 5.4.8 (b).

(c) Protection of important public views

See 6.2.2 (c) above.

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge

Until modeling studies are submitted, it is not clear how this building may appear from Colchester Avenue or Fletcher Place. Materials have not been defined, but appear to be metal sheet siding and masonry veneer. A landscaping plan will help understand proposed ground plantings that will enhance the entrance and the site. The large building façade facing Colchester Avenue is somewhat stark; appearing to be more like an entrance to a commercial purveyor than a welcoming homelike entry.

(e) Quality of materials

The specific materials are unknown at present. More specific information will be expected at application.

(f) Reduce energy utilization

There is no information relative to energy efficiency of the proposed buildings. At a minimum, the buildings must comply with the city's current energy efficiency requirements.

A large solar array is illustrated on the roof of Building #1, which if installed will provide a significant benefit to the buildings' energy tag.

(g) Make advertising features complimentary to the site

No advertising features are included in the proposal. Signs are subject to subject zoning permit review.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design

No building mounted mechanical equipment (other than solar panels) or meters are noted on the elevation plans. Any rooftop equipment must be incorporated into an architectural feature as part of the overall project design. They may not simply be placed atop the roofs. Mailbox location will be required as part of final plan submission.

See previous comments about the location of trash and recycling.

(i) Make spaces safe and secure

As a multi-unit building, the new structure should have an intercom system to maximize personal safety of the tenants. The Fire Marshal will need to approve a plan for site access.