

## Department of Planning and Zoning

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**TO:** Design Advisory Board  
**FROM:** Scott Gustin  
**DATE:** March 10, 2015  
**RE:** 15-0801PD, 140 Grove Street

=====  
Zone: RL                                      Ward: 1  
Owner/Representative:                  Ireland Grove Street Properties

**Request:** Final plat review of PUD to demolish existing concrete plant and buildings, construct 19 new buildings for 232 residential units, clubhouse, and maintenance building with associated road, parking, and site improvements.

### **OVERVIEW:**

The applicant is seeking final plat approval for a 232-unit residential development, including 19 multi-family buildings, clubhouse, maintenance garage, and associated site improvements. The existing industrial buildings will be demolished and removed. This project received preliminary plat approval from the Development Review Board on March 20, 2014. That approval included the following conditions related to design review criteria.

1. Prior to final plat application, the applicant shall contact the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation to inquire as to studies of the area that may indicate heightened archaeological significance.
2. Prior to final plat application, the site plan shall be substantially revised to strengthen the interior streetscape and to provide for a more gradual transition between smaller buildings to the largest apartment buildings.
3. Final plat plans shall depict mechanical equipment, "hot box," and outdoor mailbox details.
4. Final plat plans shall contain consistent building labels between the elevation drawings and site plans. Elevation drawings in the final plat plans shall also include finished grade information on all building sides for all buildings proposed. The final plat plans shall also include accurate perspective drawings. The elevation drawings as presented at preliminary plat are not approvable.
5. Final plat plans shall include a revised clubhouse building design with greater emphasis on perceived verticality.
6. Final plat plans shall include installation details for the proposed exterior building materials.
7. Final plat plans shall depict a concrete public sidewalk across the access drive into the development.
8. Final plat plans shall address the feasibility of solar energy or hot water, or at least solar-ready construction, for the development.
9. Final plat plans shall include fixture cut sheets and illumination levels for building entries shall be provided.

10. The existing 59' tall concrete structure immediately along Grove Street shall be retained and integrated into the project design. Details shall be provided in the final plat plans. Buildings on the lower (eastern) plateau of the property may utilize this structure for a height limit. Buildings on the upper (western) plateau shall not exceed the standard 35' height limit.

The final plat plans address each of these conditions as noted below. In addition to revisions to reflect the preliminary plat conditions, the total unit count has dropped by 13 from the 245 included in the preliminary plat approval.

## **ARTICLE 6: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STANDARDS**

### ***Part 1, Land Division Design Standards***

#### ***Sec. 6.1.2, Review Standards***

No new subdivision of land is proposed; however, several lot line adjustments with neighboring properties are included. The required boundary surveys have been submitted and clearly depict the proposed adjustments. The two primary parcels that form the basis of this development; however, continue to read as two parcels. The applicant's intent is to merge these two parcels together as recommended. The boundary survey must be revised to include this merger.

### ***Part 2, Site Plan Design Standards***

#### ***Sec. 6.2.2, Review Standards***

##### ***(a) Protection of important natural features***

The property is bordered by the Winooski River to the north, and Centennial Brook runs through a portion as well. The Riparian & Littoral Conservation Zone that buffers these waterways affects the property. Extensive wetlands are also present on the property, particularly on its eastern end. The associated Wetland Conservation Zone protects these wetlands. The Conservation Board reviewed this project under Sec. 4.5.4, *Natural Resource Protection Overlay District* at their March 2, 2015 meeting and recommended approval. For the purposes of this design review criterion, the proposed development does not infringe on any of the wetlands or waterways running by or through the property. The contiguous stands of forest bordering the development site to the north and east will remain intact. All proposed construction will take place within existing developed area.

##### ***(b) Topographical alterations***

The area to be redeveloped sits on two plateaus; upper by Grove Street and lower set back to the east. A number of retaining walls are proposed, particularly where there are relatively large changes in grade over short distances (i.e. such as into the underground garage entries). These retaining walls will consist of poured concrete or a more decorative concrete block. Where the two different types of wall will be installed is not clear and should be. While grading and filling is needed for construction throughout the site, the general topography will remain as it presently exists.

##### ***(c) Protection of important public views***

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

##### ***(d) Protection of important cultural resources***

The property is not included in the city's map of archeologically sensitive areas (in the Open Space Protection Plan); however, its location along the Winooski River increases the likelihood that

prehistoric artifacts may be present. As required by the preliminary plat approval, the applicant consulted with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and conducted a site visit on July 11, 2014. No archaeologically sensitive areas were identified within the project footprint.

*(e) Supporting the use of alternative energy*

No alternative energy is incorporated into the project design. Solar energy utilization remains a possibility, and as required by the preliminary plat approval, the buildings will be constructed to be solar-ready for rooftop panels.

*(f) Brownfield sites*

The property is included on the Vermont DEC Hazardous Site List. The listing indicates that diesel and heating oil contamination were found but also notes that Site Management Activities were completed in 1999.

*(g) Provide for nature's events*

A stormwater management system is proposed. The system has evolved to include a variety of rain gardens, grassed swales, catch basins and an onsite "wet" pond for attenuation. While most runoff will eventually reach the pond prior to discharge into the Winooski River, provision has been made to allow for some infiltration onsite. Existing discharge points into Centennial Brook will be eliminated. The Conservation Board reviewed and recommended approval of the stormwater management plan at their March 2, 2015 meeting. The proposed stormwater system is under review by the Stormwater Administrator and is subject to final approval.

A comprehensive erosion prevention and sediment control plan has been provided. The Conservation Board reviewed and recommended approval of the erosion prevention and sediment control plan at their March 2, 2015 meeting. As with stormwater management, final approval by the Stormwater Administrator is required.

Several areas for snow storage are interspersed throughout the site. All of the residential buildings and the clubhouse feature sheltered entrances.

*(h) Building location and orientation*

The proposed development is large enough that it will essentially result in the establishment of a new neighborhood. The visible public streetscape along Grove Street is an important component; however, equally important is the establishment of a well-defined built environment, functional open spaces, and interconnectivity between these components within this new neighborhood.

The most substantial project changes since preliminary plat approval relate to the proposed buildings and their layout along the interior streets. The preliminary plat approval required that the site plan be substantially revised to strengthen the interior streetscape and provide for a more gradual transition from the relatively small duplexes to the largest apartment buildings. The proposed revisions address this condition.

Duplexes flank the entry into the project and continue north along Grove Street. Another row of duplexes and a 6-plex face the center green. Duplexes and 6-plexes line the entry drive to the first intersection. These smaller buildings reflect the scale of neighboring residences and begin the transition to the larger buildings further into the interior of the development. On the upper plateau, street corners have been hardened, and buildings have been set parallel to the interior roads. All of

the buildings are oriented towards the street (either Grove or interior streets) and, further into the development, arranged around a center green. The three largest apartment buildings and the clubhouse are set on the lower plateau, farthest away from Grove Street homes. These larger buildings are orientated towards the interior streets and set parallel thereto. In all cases, the buildings are set close to the interior streets with clearly identifiable entries connected to the walkway network.

Overall, the project revisions achieve the required transition in scale from smaller buildings along Grove Street to the larger buildings set farthest into the interior of the development. The interior streetscape has been strengthened by way of improved building siting, diversification, and orientation.

*(i) Vehicular access*

One existing curb cut will be removed to allow for restoration of the Centennial Brook channel. Doing so will leave one curb cut to serve the development. Adequacy of access has been approved by the Fire Marshal. Sight lines and turning radii are subject to review and approval by the Department of Public Works.

*(j) Pedestrian access*

All proposed buildings have front walkways that connect to the walkway network throughout the development. This interior walkway network connects to the public sidewalk along Grove Street. This public sidewalk will be extended into South Burlington as part of this development. The new duplexes facing Grove Street each have individual front walkways connecting to the public sidewalk.

The final plat plans clearly note the continuation of the concrete public sidewalk across the access drive into the development. Previously, striping had been noted. Within the interior street network, crosswalks are striped. Concrete crosswalks are preferable if feasible.

Pedestrian routes from parking areas are depicted on the project plans.

*(k) Accessibility for the handicapped*

Handicap parking spaces are depicted on the site plans. The buildings will require handicap accessible features per the ADA as administered through the city's building code.

*(l) Parking and circulation*

Parking will be provided underneath the 6 largest buildings, along the interior streets, and in several surface parking lots. Parking along the interior streets is mostly parallel, buildings are oriented towards the streets or center green with parking behind, and adequate space is afforded for circulation along the interior streets and within the parking lots.

This criterion also requires shading of surface parking areas. A shading study has been provided that demonstrates 30% or greater shading of the three interior parking lots. Shading is achieved with new shade trees required by this criterion. Note that the shading study assumes the vernal equinox. In Vermont, there are no leaves on the trees at the vernal equinox. The autumnal equinox would be more appropriate, although the analysis would likely yield equivalent results.

Details will be addressed by the Development Review Board under the criteria of Article 8; however, it bears noting that the proposed site plans include a number of bike racks interspaced throughout the site. Preliminary plat plans included 200 long term spaces and 142 short term spaces, but details are lacking in the final plat plans. Details as to the number and type of bike parking facilities are needed as part of the final plat plans.

*(m) Landscaping and fences*

A comprehensive landscaping plan has been provided and includes an extensive mix of new trees, shrubs, and perennials. Trees will line all of the parking areas and interior streets. A line of new street trees is proposed along Grove Street and has been reviewed and approved by the City Arborist. The center green features a small grove of apple trees and community garden space. Other edible plantings within the project include strawberries, black berries, raspberries, and high bush blue berries. Generally, the proposed landscaping is used to provide boundaries between interior spaces and to soften transitions between buildings and pavement. Split rail fencing will be installed to follow the eastern “ridgeline” along the clearing boundaries of the site. It too will provide a boundary between the developed and wooded portions of the property.

The existing 59’ tower structure immediately along Grove Street will be retained as required. Details pertaining to the renovation of this former industrial structure have been provided. The structure will be cleaned up and will have a new publicly accessible pavilion on top. The top of the structure affords significant views over the site and the river below. As such it is intended to serve as both an overlook and a memorial to the former industrial site.

*(n) Public plazas and open space*

Substantial open space will be available for use by residents of the development. A large center green is proposed and may be used for active or passive recreation. A clubhouse and community pool are also provided. Two pavilions will provide sheltered space for outdoor activities. Links to trails will be provided and will afford access into the wooded portions of the property. Two community garden sites are also depicted on the final plat plans. Whether these gardens will be available just to residents of the development or open to Burlington residents generally (i.e. such as part of the Burlington Area Community Gardens program) needs to be clarified.

*(o) Outdoor lighting*

New outdoor lighting will consist of pole-mounted fixtures for parking and circulation areas, and wall-mounted fixtures for building entries. There is seemingly a third fixture type noted as “L3” in the lighting plan, but details are not evident. Fixture locations are depicted on project plans, and the proposed lights are acceptable cut-off fixtures. Acceptable illumination levels are indicated in all lighting environments (building entries, parking & circulation, and walkways). Mounting heights of the parking & circulation fixtures are not noted and must be.

*(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design*

Substantial new infrastructure will be required to support the proposed development. A utility plan and details sheet have been provided. All utility lines must be buried.

Several dumpster pad locations are evident on the site plan. The project plans provide details specifying concrete pads with full enclosures (fiber cement board siding with wire fence gates).

The preliminary plat plans noted that the larger apartment buildings will have interior wall-mounted mail boxes. The smaller buildings will share exterior “gang” boxes. Presumably, the same is true of the final plat plans. The only outdoor mailbox location noted on the site plan is near the duplexes. The proposed “gang” mail box is a standard metal cabinet. As noted in the preliminary plat review, these metal cabinets should be enclosed within small sheds built to reflect the architecture of the duplexes they will serve.

A utility plan has been provided and depicts the location of utility “hot boxes” and HVAC pads as required. Most are placed away from the interior streets, and all appear to be screened with landscaping.

### ***Part 3, Architectural Design Standards***

#### ***Sec. 6.3.2, Review Standards***

##### ***(a) Relate development to its environment***

###### ***1. Massing, Height, and Scale***

The final plat plans include a somewhat different variety of building types. There are more duplexes (there are 9 now). Some previously proposed larger apartment buildings have been replaced by a cluster of 6-unit buildings. A previously proposed 33-unit building has been replaced with two separate buildings (21 and 6 units). A full story has been eliminated from building “I”. The largest apartment buildings, (J, R, T, and S) remain essentially unchanged. As required, building labeling has been cleaned up for consistency between the site plans and elevation drawings. The maintenance garage, however, is mislabeled as a second building “G” (it should be Q). Perspective images have also been improved to depict the buildings as they are shown in the elevation drawings.

The duplexes provide an appropriate starting point for the new development along Grove Street. Their massing, height, and scale is similar to that of existing residences along the street. This is the single most important consideration under this criterion for new residential development.

Further into the development, the duplexes blend into a cluster of 6-unit buildings. The 6-plexes successfully read as large homes. They effectively utilize fenestration, porches, dormers, and other architectural details to provide some level of intricacy to these fairly large buildings. The larger structures, ranging from 21 to 44 units, all read as apartment buildings. These buildings incorporate a variety of porches, balconies, varying materials, and architectural details to avoid any large expanses of undifferentiated building mass. The buildings also appear more vertical than horizontal as required by this criterion. As recommended, an overall materials palate is proposed. Material selection and arrangement on individual buildings may vary to avoid exact replication.

The clubhouse building is dimensionally similar to what was depicted on the preliminary plat plans. As required, however, siding and fenestration has been changed to provide more a more vertical emphasis on the building’s appearance.

Lastly, a new maintenance garage has been added to the final plat plans. This building is set into the hillside and will be minimally visible from most of the development. It will be most prominent as viewed from the clubhouse across the street. The building is a fairly small and

reads as a basic garage structure clad in materials similar to those used elsewhere in the development.

## *2. Roofs and Rooflines*

The duplexes include traditional gable roofs. The 6-unit buildings incorporate a hip roof design with roof dormers to enable living space. The proposed roof type is typical of residential development. The larger buildings are essentially gable-roofed structures. Within this gable roof form, differing planes and dormers break up the overall roof mass. The clubhouse building includes a gable roof with dormers, and the maintenance garage has a basic gable roof.

## *3. Building Openings*

Proposed fenestration in the duplexes and 6-unit buildings is typical for residential development and appears to consist primarily of double hung windows with grilles applied in a consistent pattern. There is more variation in the larger apartment buildings. That variation helps to define individual components within these larger structures. The clubhouse includes fenestration unique within the development and has been changed to reflect a more vertical emphasis. The relatively unique fenestration appropriately helps to differentiate it from the residential buildings. Windows within the maintenance garage consist of basic awning units that serve to allow sunlight and fresh air into the building. Their basic appearance is consistent with the overall appearance of the garage.

### *(b) Protection of important architectural resources*

Buildings within the existing concrete plant are not historically significant. Their demolition will not adversely impact any important architectural resources. As noted previously, the existing tower structure immediately along Grove Street will be retained and made into a quasi-historical memorial to the long-time industrial use of the site.

### *(c) Protection of important public views*

See 6.2.2 (c) above.

### *(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge*

The proposed development is large enough to amount to the creation of a new residential neighborhood. The final plat plans bring all of the structures close to the street at parallel angles. All of the buildings contain well defined, street-facing front entries (many with porches), and all are connected to the sidewalk network.

### *(e) Quality of materials*

Exterior building materials consist largely of varying types of vinyl siding (lap and shingle). Some brick veneer will be utilized on the largest apartment buildings and on portions of the clubhouse. Composite trim (5" wide) will be installed along with asphalt shingle roofing. Railings will be metal, and extruded vinyl windows will be installed. Vinyl siding is not especially durable; however, during preliminary plat review, the Design Advisory Board and the Development Review Board found that vinyl could be acceptable depending on installation details. The final plat plans include detailed elevation drawings and perspective drawings. Installation details, however, are lacking. A materials detail drawing or materials board is needed to demonstrate how the materials will be installed and how intersections between differing materials will be made.

*(f) Reduce energy utilization*

The proposed buildings must comply with the city's current energy efficiency requirements. As noted previously, the buildings will be constructed to be solar ready.

*(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*

Vents are noted on the elevation drawings and are acceptably located on secondary elevations. No utility meters are evident. They must be depicted and screened. No rooftop mechanical equipment is proposed.

*(i) Make spaces safe and secure*

Building entries will be illuminated. Intercom systems are recommended to maximize the personal safety of the tenants. The Fire Marshal has approved the single site access.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

Review and forward to the Development Review Board subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to review by the Development Review Board, the following items are needed:
  - a. Details as to the number and type of bike parking facilities (long and short term) must be provided;
  - b. Clarification of what types of retaining walls (poured or block) will be installed where;
  - c. Details as to whether the proposed community gardens will be available just to residents of the development or to Burlington residents generally (i.e. such as part of the Burlington Community Gardens program);
  - d. Lighting cutsheet for fixture "L3" and mounting heights of parking and circulation lighting fixtures;
  - e. Enclosure details for the "gang" mail boxes; and,
  - f. Exterior building material installation details (either detail drawing or materials board).
2. As part of final plat approval, the following conditions are recommended:
  - a. Revised boundary survey to depict the merger of the two primary parcels on which the proposed development will be built;
  - b. Corrected labeling for the maintenance garage (i.e. should be building Q);
  - c. Depiction and screening of utility meters; and,
  - d. Installation of concrete crosswalks within the development if feasible.