

May 26, 2023

Planning Board
1204 Main Street
Holden, MA 01520

Re: Amendment of Variance & Special Permit
Jefferson Mills, LLC
V-0501 & SP-0508

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board:

Jefferson Mills, LLC is filing to amend the previously issued site plan approval for the Jefferson Mill project to accommodate 63 units.

By way of background, the Board issued a variance and special permit in 2005 that allowed a 47-unit residential project. The variance authorized residential development in a mixed-use district and other relief. The special permit found the project to be suitable for the location and zoning district. The variance and special permit were subsequently extended through November 1, 2024. Jefferson Mills, LLC has recently secured ZBA approval for the amended variance, and now seeks to amend the site plan approval to allow for a 63-unit residential project for the reasons set forth below.

As you might be aware, Jefferson Mills LLC, bought the mill, together with the existing plans and permits from the prior owners in September of 2021. The prior owners had begun construction based on a design for 47 units, using a set of plans originally developed in the mid-2000's before ceasing activity around 2008. These plans are now out of date and required extensive revisions that are summarized below.

After ceasing construction, the prior owner advertised the mill for sale periodically for many years - without finding a buyer. Jefferson Mills, LLC was ultimately able to secure the financing needed to acquire the project and begin construction of Phase 1, being the large rectangular building, sometimes identified as Building 5 on plans.

After completing the purchase, but before beginning construction, Jefferson Mills, LLC engaged an architect to review the design with two goals: first, to develop plans in compliance with the Massachusetts Historic Commission (“MHC”), and National Park Service¹ (“NPS”) historic rehabilitation standards. And second, to develop unit layouts more well-suited to today’s rental market. The Phase 1 redesign resulted in these three key differences:

- 1) Previously, 28 extra-large units were to be constructed in Building 5. Our plans accommodate 34 units, in a design acceptable to the MHC and NPS.
- 2) Previously, the elevator was proposed to be constructed in a new addition on the exterior. This was cost prohibitive and also was not in compliance with historic rehabilitation standards. The new design houses the elevator within the existing structure and allows for a more streamlined entrance to the covered parking.
- 3) The parking proposed in the basement of Building 5 is reduced from 66 spots to 45. A structural review of the previous owner’s plans for creating the 66 spots in the basement identified unresolvable issues requiring a change in design.

Construction is going well, and crews of plumbers, electricians, carpenters, flooring installers & painters are all working hard every day to finish the first units. The units are coming out well and it is anticipated they will be available for occupancy in the next few months.

With the substantial progress of Phase 1, we are looking forward to Phase 2; the contiguous group of buildings that are directly adjacent to Main St. A redesign of these buildings is also necessary to create units that are economically viable (and financeable in this environment), and that conform to the requirements of MHC and NPS. The result is a design, now approved by MHC & NPS, for 29 units: 21 one-bedrooms, 6 two-bedrooms and 2 three-bedrooms.

To accommodate parking for the additional units, the plans propose creating parking in the south-east corner of the site. The 23 spaces proposed in this location will largely replace the parking spots that were not able to be constructed in the Building 5 basement and will result in 103 spaces in total across the site (previously 90 spaces in total were proposed). While it is expensive to create the new parking in this location, it will ensure that there is adequate parking for all tenants and their guests.

Also, MHC/NPS rejected the previously proposed private patios between Building 5 and Village Way. Removing these patios does allow us to convert the previously proposed parallel parking along Village Way, into full-sized nose-in spots. There will be 13ft between the front of the parked cars and the building. Nose-in parking is a more efficient layout, and also addresses neighbors’ prior concerns about these parallel parking spots necessitating u-turns across Village Way.

¹ A key part of the financial plan for the Mill redevelopment is securing tax credits that are available from MHC and NPS for renovating historic buildings to their standards.

Together, these changes will result in fewer cars making the turn into the covered parking under Building 5, and fewer cars using the Village Way entrance at all; both of which will be to the benefit of our neighbors in the Mill Pond townhouse complex.


The proposed enlargement of the long-time existing parking alongside Main St to accommodate 23 spaces was carefully designed to maximize the stopping sight distance when entering Main St, and meets the standards required. Relevant memorandums supporting this are attached to this submission.

Other permits required for this revised plan include Conservation, DCR, ODS & DOT. We are close to completing the Conservation permitting process, and the DCR & ODS submissions are being worked on. The DOT permit has been secured, only subject to payment of the bond. Additionally – as was requested at the prior site plan hearings - this DOT permit also authorizes the widening of Village Way, at the intersection with Main St, to support easier right turns.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to completing the conversion of the mill into beautiful and high-quality housing for residents of Holden, and being a good neighbor for many years to come.

Very truly yours,

Jefferson Mills LLC

By  _____
Timothy Adler, manager.