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Planning Division
Concord, NH

135 N. State Street Site Plan Application Narrative

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The existing 1.73 acre property is in the RN District, and includes a church and parish hall, as well as the historic Gov. Rollins mansion and carriage house (listed on the National Register of Historic Places). The existing property is non-conforming in a number of respects, including but not limited to non-conforming uses (non-residential uses in the RN District), excessive lot coverage, excessive building height, and lack of parking lot landscaping.

The proposed redevelopment involves the demolition of the church/parish hall and associated parking lots, and the subdivision of the property into 2 lots – (1) a 53,000+/- sf lot where the church/parish hall now stand, which lot will be developed into a “pocket neighborhood” of 8 newly-constructed “cottages” and (2) a 22,000+/- sf lot including the historic mansion and carriage house, which historic structures will be redeveloped and converted into 4 residential units (2 in mansion, 2 in carriage house).

The pocket neighborhood is an “attached dwelling development” (“ADD”) within the meaning of the Zoning Ordinance, which use is permitted in the RN District on lots of at least 25,000 sf (which is met here). The conversion of the mansion and carriage house to residential units is governed by 28-5-3 of the ZO, which allows the conversion of pre-1945 buildings in the RN District subject to certain lot size requirements (the mansion lot substantially exceeds the 13,500 sf minimum lot size for a conversion to 4 units, as proposed). Several variances for the redevelopment are required and will be heard at the May ZBA meeting. (Substantially similar variances were granted in 2018 for an earlier version of the proposed redevelopment.)

As shown on the plans submitted with this application, the pocket neighborhood “cottages” are all 1 ¾-story 1800 sf homes with a bungalow/cottage architectural style and scale, which is intended to be complementary to the mansion/carriage house, and similar in style to the streetscape of the abutting section of Church Street. All of the cottages have an attached 2-car garage, and all cottages include first floor bedrooms. The cottages are arranged around a well landscaped “court” – which is a hallmark of good pocket neighborhood design.

With the exception of the construction of small new entry porches -- and some substantial repairs to remedy recent neglect -- the exterior of the mansion and the carriage house will be largely unchanged. Two small garages will be constructed for the residential units in the mansion, and the architecture of the garages is complementary to the mansion and carriage house, as well as the Church Street streetscape.

The proposed redevelopment will have substantial benefits to the immediate neighborhood and to the City, including:

- Removes non-conforming institutional uses, and replaces them with conforming residential uses in this RN District
- Substantially reduces lot coverage (on a combined basis, lot coverage is below the 50% maximum lot coverage in RN)
- Eliminates many other significant non-conformities, including building height, unlandscaped parking areas, etc.

- Preserves and restores important historical structures – the Gov. Rollins mansion and carriage house which are among the small number of properties in Concord individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Redevelops what has become a vacant site, which has attracted some unwanted behavior
- The redevelopment will have a substantial positive effect on the values of surrounding properties, and will be in character with the immediate neighborhood (preservation of the mansion which is one of several large, prominent N. State St. properties; and design of PN cottages similar in size and design to the abutting homes along the lower section of Church St.)

