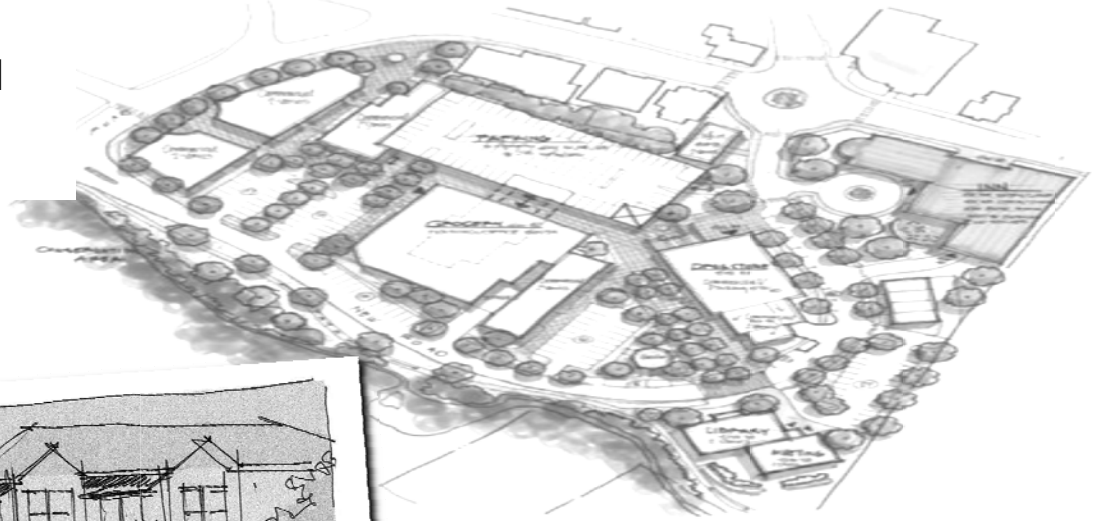


A New Village Center

Durham's Vision for a Redeveloped Mill Plaza

Report of the Mill Plaza
Study Committee and
AIA150 Team to the
Durham Town Council

May 5, 2008



Sketches by Nick Isaak, hybrid concept by AIA150 Design Teams

<http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/index.html>



May 5, 2008

Dear Town Council members,

The Mill Plaza Study Committee is proud to transmit our report and recommendations for redeveloping the Mill Plaza property. This report reflects dozens of public meetings, workshops, and focus groups with the Durham community held during the past year with generous assistance from our partners in the New Hampshire Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. With the encouragement of Plaza owner John Pinto, we have accomplished what he asked of Durham in Fall, 2006: to “develop its vision for the future” of a redeveloped Plaza property.

The goal of this report is to offer a vision for a redeveloped “village center” that revitalizes our downtown, brings economic return to the property owner, and is reflective of community needs and concerns. It is most likely to be embraced by the community, because it stems from extensive consensus building.

In addition to our seven recommendations, this report includes a series of site plans that evolved throughout our work. These are intended to serve as a reference for the many possibilities that exist for the site. The latest of these, the so-called “hybrid” design, received much positive feedback from the community. It is not intended to be “the design” for the site, but rather demonstrate how Durham’s many goals can be met in a single approach.

While we have accomplished much, the critical task remains to align the community’s goals with the concrete needs and objectives of the property owner, leaseholders, and the developer of the site. So we begin with our recommendation to “Work Together for Success”– to arrive at plans for a redeveloped village center that leverage the vision expressed by our public in this report. We thank you for the privilege and challenge of serving the town in this task and look to your leadership in the exciting work ahead of establishing a new village center.

Most Sincerely,
The Mill Plaza Study Committee,

Dave Howland, Chair
Faculty Neighborhood

Julian Smith, Vice Chair
Durham Town Council

Douglas Bencks
*University of
New Hampshire*

Perry Bryant
*Durham Landlord
Association*

Chuck Cressy
Durham Business Association

Warren Daniel
Durham Business Association

Mark Henderson
Durham Landlord Association

Deborah Hirsch Mayer
Faculty Neighborhood

Thomas Newkirk
Faculty Neighborhood

Crawford Mills
*Durham Historic District
Commission*

Lorne Parnell
Durham Planning Board



MPSC Recommendations

This document provides the Durham Town Council a concise, unranked summary of the Mill Plaza Study Committee's recommendations - the result of more than a year of public meetings and workshops with the citizens of Durham to envision a redeveloped Mill Plaza property in our downtown.

Work Together for Success

We believe a redevelopment of the Mill Plaza that meets the interests and needs expressed by our community in the following recommendations would benefit both Durham and the Plaza property owner and developer. We recommend that town staff and their AIA150 design partners work with the owner and the developer to align their interests with the community's *before* the formal town planning approval process begins.

Create a Village Center with Quality Design

A redeveloped Plaza property should serve as a "Village Center" that stands as an example for future downtown development and provides residents a "sense of place". By this we mean year-round community space – indoor and outdoor areas where people linger to meet and talk to their friends, shop, and enjoy all of the seasons. The redevelopment should link visually and physically to Main Street, Mill Road and the UNH campus. The architecture should embrace principles of sustainability and green building. This approach holds the greatest potential for community support and the future success of the Plaza.

Promote a Balanced Mix of Uses

The redevelopment should broaden Durham's tax base through both the commercial and aesthetic value it adds to our community. Ideally, this should be achieved through a balanced mix of uses featuring an expanded grocery store, retail shops, offices, and new housing to make for a more vibrant downtown and commercially successful center for the property owner.

Balance Site Access and Flow

The redevelopment should integrate with the existing downtown and balance automobile, bicycle, mass transit, and pedestrian access while assuring the commercial viability of businesses on the site. Main Street is the preferred option for additional motor vehicle access to enhance traffic flow. The redevelopment should include adequate short and long-term parking for customers, employees, and tenants.

Include a New Town Library

For more than a decade, the Durham Public Library has been a tenant at the Mill Plaza. The Committee believes that including a new town library in a redeveloped Plaza is important to making it a true "Village Center". The Committee and Durham's Library Board of Trustees have unanimously recommended locating a new library on the property.

Respect the Neighborhood

Impacts on the nearby residential neighborhood from additional light, noise, and traffic will need to be mitigated. Specifically, given the presence of a viable alternative, the developer should avoid pursuing a motor vehicle entrance via Chesley Drive in the Faculty Neighborhood. This recommendation is supported by recent AIA150 design review, MPSC focus groups, public comment, Durham's Master Plan 2000, multiple neighborhood and townwide petitions, and decades of debate at Town Council and Planning Board meetings. We also recommend student housing be located closer to Main Street and farther from existing homes.

Protect College Brook and Its Buffer

College Brook, a tributary of the Oyster River, and its wooded wetland surroundings provide stormwater filtration, aesthetic beauty, wildlife habitat, and a valuable buffer for light and noise between the downtown commercial core and the Faculty Neighborhood. As supported by a report of the College Brook Restoration Group to the MPSC, the redevelopment should work to protect and restore the brook and its buffer's natural functions on the site. This would add value to the Plaza, reassure residential neighbors, and set an example for good environmental stewardship.

Acknowledgements

This work was a collaborative effort of the Town of Durham and the American Institute of Architects New Hampshire Chapter (AIANH). The pro-bono work of AIANH and its team of professional partners – PlanNH, The Jordan Institute, Granite State Landscape Architects, and the NH Preservation Alliance – is part of the “Blueprint for America” initiative – a yearlong observance in 2007 that marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of AIA.

This final report from the partnership comes with thanks to the people of Durham, town staff, and the volunteers of the AIA150 team – for helping to explore the potential for this exciting redevelopment – and gratitude to Mill Plaza owner John Pinto for his encouragement of our work.

AIANH Team Members

Patricia Sherman
FAIA, *Co-Chair AIA150*

Michael Castagna
Co-Chair AIA150

Maura Adams
Amy Bailey
Kevin Burke
Jennifer Czysz
Art Guadano
Greg Grigsby
Bruce Hamilton
Kate Hartnett
Tom House
David Jordan
Carolyn Isaak
John Merkle
Sonya Misiaszek
Michael Morin
Kam Smith
Richard Swett
Michael Tague
Jeff Taylor
Susan Thorne
Tom Towle
Christopher Williams

Design Teams

JSA Team

Bruce Dicker FAIA, JSA Inc., Portsmouth, NH (TEAM LEADER), Fabianna “Fabi” Orlando, Assoc. AIA, JSA Inc., Portsmouth, NH, Rob Westhelle, Assoc., AIA, JSA Inc., Portsmouth, NH, Tom Ingebritson, JSA Inc., Portsmouth, NH, Michael Tague, AIA, JSA Inc., Portsmouth, NH, Elizabeth Dudley, ASLA, The Outdoor Room, Newmarket, NH

Durham Team

Bill Schoonmaker AIA, Schoonmaker Architects, Durham, NH (TEAM LEADER), NH, Robbi Woodburn ASLA, Woodburn and Co., Newmarket, NH, Walter Rous, Durham, NH, Nick Isaak AIA, Pro Con Inc., Hooksett

Lavallee Brensinger Team

Chris Drobat AIA, Lavallee Brensinger PA, Manchester, NH (TEAM LEADER)
Chris Urner, Lavallee Brensinger PA, Manchester, NH, Michael McKeown Assoc. AIA, Lavallee Brensinger PA, Manchester, NH, Kevin Burke ASLA, Collaborative Designs, Inc., Kingston, NH

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary

MPSC Recommendations in detail	Page 3
--------------------------------	--------

II. Background & Process

A Short History of the Mill Plaza	Page 8
MPSC Timeline	Page 10
Briefly, Why Redevelop the Mill Plaza Site?	Page 11
John Pinto's letter to Durham	Page 13
Town Council Charge to MPSC	Page 14

III. Vision Statement

Original MPSC Vision Statement	Page 17
Joint MPSC/AIA150 Vision statement	Page 26

IV. Concept Designs and Summaries

Round One – Summary and drawings	Page 27
Round Two – Summary and drawings	Page 33
Round Three (Hybrid) – Summary and drawings	Page 35

V. Appendices

- A) MPSC Minutes
- B) MPSC Correspondence
- C) Letters/E-Mails from the Public
- D) RKG Report
- E) College Brook Report
- F) AIA150 Durham Outreach and PR Materials
- G) News Media Articles
- H) Design Parameters Report
- I) Chesley Drive File

I. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide the Town Council recommendations from our study of the prospects for redeveloping the Mill Plaza property – a nearly 10 acre parcel flanked by the University of New Hampshire campus, Main Street, and the faculty residential neighborhood – in the heart of Durham. These recommendations were developed over the past year with the citizens of Durham carried out by a partnership between the Mill Plaza Study Committee and members of the New Hampshire chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIANH). AIANH awarded Durham a grant of pro-bono design and consultation services in April, 2007 as part of the “Blueprint for America” initiative – a yearlong observation marking the 150th anniversary of the founding of AIA. The town/AIA150 collaboration was undertaken with the encouragement of John Pinto, the owner of the Mill Plaza property. Together with the Town-Council-appointed Mill Plaza Study Committee (MPSC), AIANH worked with a team of professional partners including PlanNH, The Jordan Institute, Granite State Landscape Architects, and the NH Preservation Alliance.

MPSC Recommendations in Detail

1. Work Together for Success

Over the past year, the Durham community – the Mill Plaza Study Committee, the Library Board of Trustees, the Town Administrator, and hundreds of residents – with their partners in the AIANH 150 Team, embarked on a challenging and exciting process to envision the future of the Mill Plaza site. Through dozens of meetings, focus groups, design charettes, and economic and environmental analysis, the community has collectively envisioned a future for the current site that can be commercially viable, well-designed, and integrated with the fabric of the town. This is a major accomplishment. However, the process is not done.

Critical unfinished business remains: continuing to engage the property owner and his developer in a substantive effort to align interests as this vision moves to the concrete submittal of documents for formal town approval. To this end, we recommend that the town retain a core membership of the AIANH150 team at the completion of the work to carry on the community’s vision. This highly skilled, professional team – deeply knowledgeable about the site, New England development and design, and the wishes of Durham’s citizens – would serve at the behest of the Town Council to:

- ✓ Advocate for the vision developed with the community through the MPSC/ AIANH150 process
- ✓ Interact with the owner and his developer to discuss design issues and considerations, and through further dialogue, integrate the community’s wishes with the property owner’s needs *before* the official application process begins.

2. Create a Village Center with Quality Design

We recommend that the Plaza should, in broad terms, be redeveloped as a “Village Center.” Thus, mixed uses from retail to office to housing, linkages to Main Street, multiple forms of access (car, bus, pedestrian, bike), public and open space, and connection to College Brook are all important. A new and improved “shopping mall” is not our intent, though we recognize the importance of retail as the key element of successful mixed use.



We recommend public spaces that provide a pleasant and interesting experience while walking through the site, and also recommend gathering places for such events as concerts, discussions, performances, and other activities.

We believe the redevelopment should link visually and spatially with Main Street, as well as Mill Road and the UNH campus to encourage pedestrian flow between town, campus, and the adjoining neighborhoods. For that reason, we recommend that the development “wrap” business uses/buildings around from Main Street to Mill Road to increase retail along these two major roads, better connect Main Street and Mill Road, increase pedestrian traffic, and provide a visual buffer between Mill Road the site.

With the help of the AIANH150 team, we developed an evaluation matrix that includes Durham, AIANH 150/2030 Challenge, and LEED-ND (Leadership and Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development) principles (See Section III). LEED-ND integrates the principles of smart growth, new urbanism, and green building into a system for neighborhood design. LEED-ND criteria provide a measure of how the location, site planning, and design of buildings and grounds of a proposed development meet accepted high levels of environmentally responsible and sustainable development, smart growth, and energy efficiency (www.usgbc.org and then LEED-ND). To address concerns consistently raised by Durham residents, any proposed project should use the evaluation matrix throughout the development process to test proposed design features against such criteria.

Lastly, we recommend that designers of the redevelopment pay attention to such details as the eclectic surrounding architectural styles, building heights, articulation, and other design features.

3. Promote a Balanced Mix of Uses

The redevelopment should broaden Durham’s tax base through both the commercial and aesthetic value it adds. Ideally, this should be achieved through a balanced mix of uses to feature an expanded grocery store, retail shops, offices, and new housing to make for a more vibrant downtown and commercially successful center for the property owner. In addition to a drug store and an expanded grocery store, we recommend the following uses:

Housing

We believe that housing needs to be a part of the redevelopment. Though some on the Committee would generally prefer non-student housing, we recognize that it can be difficult to prescribe types of housing, especially over longer periods of time. Thus, we encourage

that any housing – student, workforce, or senior housing – be built sufficiently distant from current residential neighborhoods, perhaps on or near Main Street.

Office Space

We recommend office space as a key element of the mixed uses on the site. Office space can generate meaningful tax revenues, is likely marketable in this region, and can provide a cluster of services needed by Durham residents and UNH faculty and students. We encourage office uses that have evening as well as daytime hours to promote activity during the evening.



Other Retail

We recommend the design “wrap” a variety of retail businesses – such as a restaurant and a bookstore – from Main Street around to Mill Road in order to better connect the Mill Plaza site with the Main Street retail establishments.

4. Balance Site Access & Flow

The redevelopment should balance automobile, bicycle, mass transit, and pedestrian access while ensuring the commercial viability of businesses on the site.

Pedestrian

We recommend there be numerous pedestrian access points and paths that tie the grocery store other parts of the site to one another as well as to Main Street, the University, and neighborhoods. These paths should be inviting, well designed, and take practical account of pedestrians’ current and likely future use of the site.

Bicycle

We recommend a bike path be available on at least the buffer/park along College Brook and that sufficient bike racks and storage facilities be provided in various locations to ensure site users are encouraged to bike. This might mean a bike storage facility in part of any parking garage, for instance.

Traffic Flow

We recommend a continuous road be developed through the site from Mill Road to Main Street.

Commercial Loading/Unloading

We recommend loading zones and dumpsters be hidden from public view and that noise and glare be buffered to the greatest extent possible.

Parking

We recommend that the site have sufficient parking to support the proposed mixed uses. At the same time, we recommend that the final design avoid a single large “ocean” of parking as currently configured.

We recommend greater use of vegetation and trees, “sunk” islands rather than elevated ones for trees/vegetation, parking areas broken up among different spaces and buildings, and the construction, if necessary, of a parking structure.

We strongly recommend that any parking structure serve Main Street also, and be masked or covered through various design techniques (such as wrapping buildings around) so that it does not visually dominate the overall development.

5. Include a New Town Library

We strongly support providing space for a new town library on the site. This would bring more potential customers to the Plaza during daytime, weekend, and evening hours, provide a long-standing, secure anchor for the site, and create valuable civic space. The Committee supports the Library Board of Trustees’ desire to begin this portion of redevelopment as quickly as possible and asks that the library be included in Phase I of any redevelopment. The library trustees and town should enter into negotiations with the property owner about the terms and cost of siting the library permanently in the Plaza in a way that meets all parties’ interests.



Siting the new library in the southeast corner of the property would create a vibrant new public space for our community and our children in the near term. This would also serve as a community-oriented catalyst for future development of the site. The siting of the library at this location would allow for non-motorized access and green space around the library, and would provide a permanent, non-motorized buffer between Faculty Neighborhood and the Plaza.

6. Respect the Neighborhood

For the sake of thoroughness and fairness, we asked the AIANH150 design teams to consider opening vehicular access via Chesley Drive – despite the long history of political and environmental opposition in Durham to such a move and a recommendation in Durham’s 2000 Master Plan against it. After independently studying the idea, the design teams recommended against opening Chesley Drive to vehicles for several reasons, among

them: 1) it would negatively impact a natural, pleasant feature of the current site; 2) it would pose numerous additional traffic challenges including increased traffic not only on Chesley Drive, but on the roads that lead into it; 3) it might adversely affect College Brook; 4) it would likely require property takings and other difficult actions; and, 5) a second vehicular access at Main Street presents a better design alternative.

We recommend the wooded path and wetland at the southeast corner of the site be maintained as a buffer to the adjacent Faculty Neighborhood. This would preserve the existing pedestrian and bicycle gateway to the neighborhood via Chesley Drive. The existing buffer might be secured through construction of buildings, establishment of permanent open space, wooded paths, and/or a playground.

The Committee considered a number of designs and obtained the input of Faculty Road residents to determine what kinds of design features or mitigations would meet their interests, including: 1) enhancing the College Brook as a buffer to the residential neighborhood; 2) designing lighting that does not shine into the residential neighborhood; 3) buffering the residential neighborhood visually and acoustically from new loading docks; 4) siting any new student housing closer to Main Street.

7. Protect College Brook and Its Buffer

We recommend that public space be provided along College Brook for: 1) a brookside park for walking, biking, and other activities; 2) access between neighborhoods, the Plaza, and the University; and, 3) key functions such as flood storage, water filtration, and wildlife habitat. This brookside park should incorporate curves and other features to appear more natural.

The Committee further encourages “low impact” designs incorporating features such as rain gardens, natural swales, permeable asphalt, retention ponds, underground filtration systems, and roof gardens to effectively and more naturally manage storm water. More detailed ideas can be found in the College Brook Report prepared for the Committee.

We recommend a vegetated buffer that offers open space, natural filtering, and other functions between the brook, riparian area, and Plaza of at least 25 feet, where possible. In any case, the buffer should be no less than at present. We strongly recommend considering the brook, buffer, and site itself as a single integrated whole to avoid separations and distinctions that would reduce the aesthetic and functional value of either the brook or the built environment at the Plaza.



Understanding that the brook’s overall health is also affected by uses and constraints beyond the Plaza, we encourage all neighbors to the brook – including UNH – to pursue opportunities to help restore the brook’s multiple natural functions.

II. Background

This section of the report serves to provide some historical context for the work undertaken by the town to study the Mill Plaza redevelopment. It includes a brief history of the Plaza, a basic timeline of significant events in the study process, a summary of some reasons to redevelop the property, a copy of a letter from Mill Plaza property owner John Pinto encouraging the study, and the Town Council Resolution that created the Committee.

A Short History of the Mill Plaza

At about the time Julian Smith (a current Town Councilor and our MPSC vice chair) bought a house in Durham in 1965, the property that would become the site of the Mill Plaza went on the market. Dick Houghton told the Mill Plaza Study Committee that although some members of the business community thought the town should acquire the property and establish a town center there, the three selectmen were not interested because there was at that time no pressing need for more space to conduct town business. At that time, the selectmen and various town boards met in the Court House – and the town clerk and police department were also housed in the Court House while the Public Works Department operated in several buildings on what is now the back of the Town Hall parking lot. And in those days, of course, the town library was located in the University of New Hampshire's Dimond Library.

Exactly forty years ago, in 1967, two New Hampshire developers, Sam Tamposi and Ed Lehoullier, began the process of developing a nearly 10-acre parcel east of Mill Road between College Brook and the rear of buildings along Main Street. In their first conceptual plan for the development of the property that would become the Plaza, they proposed two town roads across their property: one running just north of College Brook from what was then and still is the end of Chesley Drive all the way to Mill Road, and a second coming down from Main Street across the Grange property and connecting at a right angle to the extension of Chesley Drive. Nothing came of the plan to build those two proposed town roads – and the first phase of the Plaza development opened in 1969 with a single building containing five businesses, including a grocery, a pharmacy, and a hardware store serviced by a parking lot about half the size of the present lot.

In 1968, at town meeting, that warrant included an article to see if the town would purchase land and buildings located at 29 Main Street, two doors east of the town-owned Grange, “to provide facilities for relocation and expansion of the Town offices.” That article failed by a vote of 360 to 88. In 1969, the board of selectmen, which had expanded from three to five members, decided to buy the two buildings that were later combined to make our present town hall.

Early in 1973, a traffic engineer for the New Hampshire Department of Public Works and Highways wrote to Becky Frost, the chair of the Durham Planning Board, to say that it would be “advantageous” to have additional vehicular access to the Plaza from Chesley Drive on the east and from Main Street via the Grange property on the north.

In 1974, as part of the process for approving and expansion of the parking lot and the construction of a second building on the site, the developers deeded to the town a

right-of-way parallel to the brook connecting Chesley Drive to Main Street with the stipulation that the town would have to vote at town meeting to build that town road within two years and build and accept that town road within five years of that vote. At the Durham Town Meeting in March 1974, Durham voters rejected a proposal put forward by Town Selectmen to extend Chesley Drive as a vehicular route to Mill Road. Instead, voters approved an amended proposal to extend Chesley Drive only as a foot and bicycle path. The vehicular right-of-way became null and void.

Over the years, several attempts to extend Chesley Drive into the Plaza have been defeated – in town meeting votes and in efforts to write the goal into the zoning ordinance and the master plan. Hundreds of residents, both inside and out of the Faculty neighborhood have signed petitions, written letters and attended meetings to voice support for preserving the buffer and wetland between Chesley Drive and the Mill Plaza. This green pedestrian-and-bike friendly corridor is used by residents across town as a gateway between the downtown, the Faculty neighborhood, and the Mill Pond. As a result of a town-wide petition and concerted engagement of the Faculty neighborhood, the town's current master plan calls for its enhancement as a pedestrian gateway to the Mill Pond and further states that Chesley Drive "should be excluded from evaluation as an option for improved access to the Mill Plaza." These sentiments were echoed strongly in the neighborhood focus group hosted in July and in subsequent meetings for this report (For more information, see the Chesley Drive file in the Appendix).

Additionally, as noted in the Executive Summary, AIANH150 designers independently studied opening vehicular access via Chesley Drive and recommended against it for several reasons, among them: 1) it would negatively impact a natural, pleasant feature of the current site; 2) it would pose numerous additional traffic challenges including increased traffic not only on Chesley Drive, but on the roads that lead into it; 3) it might adversely affect College Brook; 4) it would likely require property takings and other difficult actions; and, 5) a second vehicular access at Main Street presents a better design alternative.

In 1983, the original developers sold the two buildings and other improvements (but not the land) to Mr. Pinto, an investment banker doing business as Colonial Durham Associates. Ten years later, in 1993, the original developers sold the land itself to Mr. Pinto. As time passed, the police department moved out of town hall into its own facility on Dover Road – and Public Works moved to Stone Quarry Drive.

In 1995, the town's Community Development Plan observed what had been obvious for some years: "The Mill Plaza makes up a large portion of the Central Business District and is currently not used to its potential." That plan had as a goal: "To actively engage the owners of the Mill Plaza in the improvement of the buildings and open space."

In 1997, the Durham Public Library moved out of the UNH library and began searching for a permanent home. In 2000, Durham's Master Plan established a number of goals you will find quoted in the Mill Plaza Study Committee's draft "Vision Statement" (Found in Section III of this report).

MPSC Timeline

Below is a brief timeline of significant dates and events in the MPSC process. A complete list of meetings, agendas and minutes can be found in the Appendices.

2006

Two important developments in early and mid 2006 sparked the current study process: the town undertook a space-needs assessment for both the town hall and the library – and some members of the Town Council and of the Library Board of Trustees became interested in the possibility of locating a new town center at or next to a redeveloped Plaza. As a result, Neil Niman, the chair of the Town Council, Town Administrator Todd Selig, and others met with John Pinto, the owner of the Plaza, to discuss that possibility.

September 13 – After the Durham meeting, Mr. Pinto wrote a letter to Todd Selig in which he suggested the Town “develop its vision for the future” and “design specifications” that would result in “both an improved tax base and better symmetry between the Town, the University, and [the Plaza] property.”

October 23 – After hearing a presentation by Durham architect Nick Isaak of his concept for redeveloping the Mill Plaza property, the Town Council discusses forming a formal committee to examine prospects for a redevelopment. Minutes of this meeting provide a thorough account of the beginnings of this approach.

November 20 – The Council votes to establish the Mill Plaza Study Committee (Resolution #2006-25) and charged it with “the development of a future vision for the Mill Plaza site.” The MPSC’s efforts blossomed in the collaboration with AIANH and its AIA150 partners.

2007

February 21– Mill Plaza Study Committee holds first meeting.

April 3 – AIANH selects Durham as partner for its AIA150 program.

April 4 – MPSC presents draft vision statement at workshop attended by 75 people at UNH’s MUB Theater I. MPSC and AIANH leaders develop common goals, work plan in weeks ahead.

May 2 – MPSC unanimously adopts its vision statement.

May 29 – MPSC and AIA150 hold public site walk of Mill Plaza with architects, attended by dozens of citizens.

June 6 – MPSC and AIA150 present joint work plan to include parameters report and three rounds of design.

July 18 – MPSC and AIA150 hold a meeting to report on initial efforts to study the Mill Plaza site, discuss the design process ahead, and answer questions. About 90 people attend in MUB Theater II.

August 30 – MPSC compiles its design parameters report.

September 8 – JSA, Durham, and Lavallee Brensinger design teams present Round One design schemes in a workshop at the Oyster River High School. About 100 attend.

October 17 – Richard Gsottschneider presents his financial analysis for Round One designs. The study was jointly paid for by the Town, AIA150 and Mr. Pinto.

November 4 – Design teams present Round Two design schemes in a second well-attended workshop at the Oyster River High School.

November 28 – College Brook Restoration Work Group presents its report conducted for the MPSC.

December 5 – MPSC/ AIA150 design teams set course for final “Hybrid” design round in meeting at the Oyster River High School.

2008

January 16 – MPSC unanimously endorses concept of locating a new Town library in the southeast corner of the Mill Plaza property in the first phase of a redevelopment. The Library Board of Trustees unanimously endorses the concept days later.

February 20 – MPSC and AIA150 host a final public workshop at the Oyster River Middle School with design teams to present “Hybrid” design scheme. More than 100 people attend. Feedback on the design concept – an evolution of Round One and Two designs – is largely positive.

April 16 – MPSC holds final meeting to approve report.

May 5 – MPSC scheduled to transmit final report to Town Council.

Briefly, Why Redevelop the Mill Plaza Site?

The Mill Plaza is an underutilized 9.68 acre site at the nexus of Downtown Durham, a true residential neighborhood and UNH. It holds tremendous potential for improvement – economically, socially and environmentally. At present, the Plaza hosts amenities vital to Durham such as the grocery store, library, ice cream shop and other services that can be reached by car bike or on foot.

Unfortunately, these amenities present themselves as a strip mall, situated on acres of asphalt that turns its back to related activities on Main Street due to the substantial change in grade. The Plaza cannot be seen from the higher elevations of Main Street and Main Street is not visible from the Plaza. Furthermore, the asphalt acreage

becomes a heat sink in the summer, and in the winter, snow is plowed into College Brook. The parking provided in the Plaza is more than adequate for Plaza users, yet it is not available as overflow parking for the rest of downtown. To further illustrate the underdeveloped nature of the site, the table below shows that the Plaza has a development density similar to a standard residential lot.

Present Density:

<u>Square footage of existing Mill Plaza buildings</u>	<u>52,824</u>	= 0.124
6.78 acre site (square feet)	425,430	

Comparative Density:

<u>2,600 square foot house with garage</u>	<u>2,600</u>	= .120
½ acre residential lot (square feet)	21,750	

Consider the increase in assessed value of 47 Main Street (Libby's) relative to its increase in density after it was rebuilt from a one story building into a three-story mixed-use property with a basement. A 200 percent increase in density more than quadrupled its assessed value.

Comparable Example: 47 Main Street (Libby's)

1992 Density (before fire)	<u>9,752</u>	= 1.680
	5,814	
2006 Density (after redevelopment)	<u>20,654</u>	= 3.550 (212% increase)
	5,814	

Copies follow of John Pinto's September 13, 2006 letter to the town and the November 20, 2006 Durham Town Council Resolution establishing the MPSC.



Colonial Durham Associates

Administrative Offices

405 Park Avenue, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10022
Tel 212-644-0311 ■ 212-644-0309 Fax 212-644-0320

RECEIVED

September 13, 2006

2006
ADMIN. OFFICE
TOWN OF DURHAM

Mr. Todd I. Selig
Town of Durham
15 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824

Dear Todd,

It was very good to have our meeting and subsequent conversation relating to the future growth of lovely Durham, New Hampshire.

Upon reflection, Todd, it appears that the best course of action would be for the Town to continue to develop its vision for the future. In that regard, it is important for your office and others in the Town to develop the plans and specifications for the proposed Town Center. I look forward to working with the Town as it advances upon the vision for both an improved tax base and better symmetry between the Town, the University and our property. In this regard, I would look to the Town to develop the design specifications so that we may then determine how best to participate to achieve the implementation of the vision of the Town leadership.

I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

John H. Pinto

RESOLUTION #2006-25 OF DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

CREATING A MILL PLAZA STUDY COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY VISION FOR THE MILL PLAZA IN DOWNTOWN DURHAM

WHEREAS, the Durham Town Council desires to develop a vision for the Mill Plaza (Tax Map 5, Lot 1-1) to be used for the purpose of enhancing downtown Durham for the benefit of the entire community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Durham Town Council, the governing body of the Town of Durham, New Hampshire, hereby adopts Resolution #2006-25 creating a study committee called the "Mill Plaza Study Committee" (hereinafter "committee") comprised of twelve members. The membership of the committee shall be as follows: One member to be designated by the owner of the Mill Plaza; one member of the Library Board of Trustees to be designated by the Library Trustees; one member of the Durham Planning Board to be designated by the Planning Board; one member of the Town Council designated by the Council; two members designated by the Durham Business Association; two members designated by the Durham Landlords Association; one member of the Historic District Commission designated by the Historic District Commission; two members representing the interest of the neighborhoods surrounding the Mill Plaza designated by the Town Council; one member representing the University of New Hampshire to be designated by UNH. The committee shall meet periodically until its charge is fulfilled as determined by the Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Durham Town Council hereby adopts the following charge for the Mill Pond Study Committee:

1. The development of a future vision for the Mill Plaza site. This vision may take into consideration abutting parcels as determined appropriate by the committee. The plan should pay special attention to:

- A) Increasing the taxable value of the Mill Plaza site. This plan may include a combination of retail space, office space, and rental housing stock, or any other combination of offerings, as determined by the committee and permitted by zoning.
 - B) Broadening the variety of, and square footage available for, retail businesses in the downtown area which would appeal to the permanent residents of the Town.
 - C) Creating a community gathering space (such as a village green, park, Public Library, municipal office complex, etc.) in the downtown area for Durham residents, students, staff, and faculty at the University of New Hampshire to interact with one another in positive ways specifically designed to foster a sense of community and place in Durham.
 - D) Determination as to the density and build out possible for the Mill Plaza site under existing zoning regulations.
 - E) Projected traffic impacts on downtown roadways associated with increased density at the Mill Plaza site.
 - F) Projected impact of new development at the Mill Plaza site on surrounding neighborhoods.
2. To work with the owner of the Mill Plaza site to determine what the owner's expectations and goals are for the site and to assimilate these with the goals of the community.
 3. To examine whether there would be potential economic and social benefits associated with the construction of a municipal Library, Town Office complex, and/or parking facility (either publicly or privately owned) in conjunction with the redevelopment of the Mill Plaza site.
 4. Organize focus group sessions as deemed appropriate by the committee to determine resident and business expectations for the Mill Plaza site.
 5. Make requests to the Town Administrator as needed for staff and/or contracted services to assist the committee with its charge. The Town Administrator shall evaluate such requests and make resources available as the Administrator determines appropriate and within budgeted amounts.
 6. Develop a written report and associated visual material reflecting the final recommendations of the committee for review by the Town Council. A recommendation is desired by May 2007.

7. Conduct all activities in accordance with RSA 91-A, the New Hampshire Right to Know Law.
8. Select a chairperson who shall organize and preside over the meetings of the committee, a vice-chairperson who shall preside at meetings in the absence of the chair, and a secretary who shall keep minutes of all meetings and submit these to the Town Administrator's Office for the official file.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 20th day of November, 2006 by a two-thirds majority vote of the Durham Town Council with Seven (7) voting in favor, Two (2) voting against, and Zero (0) abstaining.

Neil Niman, Chair
Durham Town Council

ATTEST:

Lorrie Pitt, Town Clerk

III. Vision Statement

This section of the report contains the vision statements that guided design work of the three AIA150 teams. Below is the original annotated MPSC vision statement, followed by a combined vision statement of the MPSC, AIA150 and LEED Program.

Mill Plaza Study Committee Vision Statement

Adopted unanimously on May 2, 2007

Preamble

Based on initial public input, our deliberations thus far, and recommendations in the Durham Master Plan, Durham Community Development Plan, and the Town Council's charge (Res # 2006-25), we the Mill Plaza Study Committee, have developed the following ten-part Vision Statement for the purpose of guiding the development of conceptual designs and our recommendations for redeveloping the Mill Plaza property. For further context, the attached appendix includes excerpts from key planning and policy documents – as well as recent public testimony and correspondence – relevant to each of the ten principles below.

Ten Principles for Mill Plaza Redevelopment

1. **Open Process:** The redevelopment should result from a genuine, thorough, and public conversation with Durham residents and should be brought to reality – taking the public's recommendations to heart – in a timely fashion.
2. **Community-Oriented Space:** The redevelopment should provide year-round community space – indoor and outdoor space where people linger to meet and talk to their friends, to shop and to enjoy all of the seasons.
3. **Mixed Uses:** The redevelopment should provide – in addition to an expanded grocery store – a variety of shops, stores and offices, and a variety of housing opportunities for families, including UNH students, faculty, and staff.
4. **Linkage:** The redevelopment should link visually and spatially with Main Street, as well as Mill Road and the UNH campus, to encourage pedestrian flow between town, campus, and the adjoining neighborhoods.
5. **Balanced Access:** The redevelopment should strike a balance among automobile, bicycle, transit, and pedestrian access to the site that ensures the commercial viability of businesses on the property and protects the integrity of the bordering Faculty neighborhood. This balance should include optimal integration of the site into the local street network.
6. **Quality Design:** The redevelopment should stand out as uniquely attractive through a design that embraces the principles of sustainability and green building – and complements its surroundings, from the Main Street and campus on one end, to the brook and quiet residential neighborhood on the other.
7. **College Brook Buffer:** The redevelopment should restore, enhance, and protect College Brook and its wooded buffer to benefit the ecology, add natural beauty to the property, and improve and strengthen the boundary between the core downtown and the bordering residential neighborhood.

8. **Civic Elements:** The redevelopment could include a new permanent town library and town hall. The purchase of adjoining land could be considered for these uses.
9. **Fiscal Enhancement:** The redevelopment should broaden the town's tax base through both the commercial and aesthetic value it adds to our community.
10. **Parking:** The redevelopment should include adequate short and long-term parking for customers, employees, and residents of apartments constructed on the Mill Plaza property. Additional parking to serve downtown Durham could be explored.

Appendix

This Appendix is intended to demonstrate how our ten principles are supported by recommendations in several key planning and policy documents. It also documents relevant public comments and correspondence. It includes references from:

- ✓ Durham Master Plan 2000
- ✓ Durham Community Development Plan 1995
- ✓ Mill Plaza Committee Council Charge (Res # 2006-25)
- ✓ Letter from Mill Plaza Owner John Pinto to Town Administrator Todd Selig (September 13, 2006):
- ✓ NH Open Meeting Law Title IV Chap 91-A
- ✓ American Institute of Architects' Ten Principles on Living Communities
- ✓ Public Comments (including April 4, 2007 hearing), Letters and E-mails

This is a work in progress that can be augmented throughout the process. In addition to grounding our goals in the work of others who came before us, references below are intended to provide greater context and guidance for us and our architects and designers as we proceed.

1. Open Process

Our goal is to encourage public participation and to function as openly as reasonably possible. To that end, we encourage public comment at our regular meetings and have held the first of a number of evening public hearings devoted to public input. Further, we have set up a Web page to post committee documents – including agendas, minutes, announcements and contact information for each committee member. We have advertised an e-mail address for the public that has brought much early correspondence.

Mill Plaza Committee Council Charge (Res # 2006-25):

The Town Council has charged us with “the development of a future vision for the Mill Plaza site” with a goal of completing a report by the end of May. We are also to “conduct all activities in accordance with RSA 91-A, the New Hampshire Right to Know Law.”

Letter from Mill Plaza Owner John Pinto to Town Administrator Todd Selig (September 13, 2006):

“... I look forward to working with the town as it advances upon the vision for both an improved tax base and better symmetry between the Town, the University and our property. In this regard, I would look to the town to develop design specifications so that we may then determine how best to participate to achieve the implementation of the vision of the Town leadership.”

Durham Community Development Plan 1995:

Improving the Plaza property has been a stated community goal for more than a decade. “Objective: To actively engage the owners of the Mill Plaza in the improvement of the buildings and open spaces” (Page 61).

Durham Master Plan 2000:

Our approach to working with the public is modeled after the town master plan process, which was open and comprehensive.

NH Open Meeting Law Title IV Chap 91-A:

“Preamble: Openness in the conduct of public business is essential to a democratic society. The purpose of this chapter is to ensure both the greatest possible public access to the actions, discussions and records of all public bodies, and their accountability to the people.”

Public Comments, Letters & E-Mails:

A month into the process, more than 100 people have taken advantage of our invitation to provide input to the committee’s work – via our regular meetings, the April 4 public hearing and our e-mail address. While a few questioned the wisdom of developing a public vision on private property – calling the committee’s task “unrealistic” and “a farce” – many expressed thanks for the opportunity provided by property owner John Pinto and the Council to have an early say, and have complimented the open process followed thus far. Several expressed optimism for what could be. One noted that the project presents a good opportunity to expand the town’s tax base by building out its core – as opposed to its more controversial periphery. The project could be done, she said, by following “smart growth” and green building principles.

2. Community-Oriented Space

Mill Plaza Committee Council Charge (Res # 2006-25):

“(C) Creating a community gathering space (such as a village green, park, Public Library, municipal office complex, etc.) in the downtown area for Durham residents, students, staff, and faculty at the University of New Hampshire to interact with one another in positive ways specifically designed to foster a sense of community and place in Durham.”

AIA’s Ten Principles on Living Communities:

“6. *Build Vibrant Public Spaces.* Citizens need welcoming, well-defined public places to stimulate face-to-face interaction, collectively celebrate and mourn, encourage civic participation, admire public art, and gather for public events.

7. *Create a Neighborhood Identity.* A ‘sense of place’ gives neighborhoods a unique character, enhances the walking environment, and creates pride in the community.”

Public Comments, Letters & E-Mails:

Several residents at the April 4 public hearing spoke to the need for public gathering space. One noted that Durham has taken a step in the right direction with summer concerts at the Mill Plaza but said the community could do better than setting up “lawn chairs on a parking lot.”

3. Mixed Uses

Mill Plaza Committee Council Charge (Res # 2006-25):

“1. A) Increasing the taxable value of the Mill Plaza site. This plan may include a combination of retail space, office space, and rental housing stock, or any other combination of offerings, as determined by the committee and permitted by zoning. B) Broadening the variety of, and square footage available for, retail businesses in the downtown area which would appeal to the permanent residents of the Town.”

Durham Master Plan 2000:

“Create a downtown Durham that has available a wide range of retail and other commercial uses, including the creation of a Professional Office District adjacent to the Central Business District (3.13)”

“Expand office/retail space by allowing apartments to be included as a mixed use on the second and third floors of three-story buildings and on the third and fourth floors of four-story buildings with two floors of commercial space. This plan will provide economic stability due to the income from apartment rentals and will also increase available commercial space (3.15)”

Durham Community Development Plan 1995:

“Encourage the expansion of retail space within the confines for downtown Durham” (Page 54).

AIA’s Ten Principles on Living Communities:

“2. *Provide Choices.* People want variety in housing, shopping, recreation, transportation, and employment. Variety creates lively neighborhoods and accommodates residents in different stages of their lives.”

Public Comments, Letters & E-Mails:

Several residents noted that they value the variety of shops available today in Durham and would not want to lose that in a new development. One said she likes to “park once

and walk” to where she needs to go. “I don’t need to leave Durham,” she said. “I like that.”

4. **Linkage**

Durham Master Plan 2000:

“Create a physical and psychological linkage of the Mill Plaza with Main Street and the rest of downtown Durham (3.16).”

5. **Balanced Access**

Durham Master Plan 2000:

“Create an environment in downtown Durham that is less vehicle oriented and is more pedestrian oriented and balances the needs of *all* modes of transportation (3.7).”

Durham Community Development Plan 1995:

“Goal – An environment in downtown Durham that is pedestrian oriented while balancing needs of *all* modes of transportation. Objective: Create a safe environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists” (Page 47).

Public Comments, Letters & E-Mails:

At least one resident at the hearing suggested a redevelopment should be welcoming to bicycle riders. Another resident warned that redevelopment should not hinder access to the grocery store by senior citizens who live nearby. One resident stressed that access for emergency vehicles must be a priority in any site design given the potential for new apartments and an increase in visitors to the property.

6. **Quality Design**

Durham Master Plan 2000:

“The image and the reality that an active, dense downtown presents is considered desirable, particularly when the downtown has a strong pedestrian presence, as is the case with Durham’s downtown. It is important to promote development that will further improve the character, vitality, and pedestrian use of the downtown. (3.16)”

AIA’s Ten Principles on Living Communities:

“10. *Design Matters*. Design excellence is the foundation of successful and healthy communities.”

Public Comments, Letters & E-Mails:

Several residents suggested adhering to the principles of green building. A couple have suggested using pervious asphalt to protect College Brook.

7. Restored Buffer

Durham Master Plan 2000:

“College Brook should be restored in those areas where it has experienced degradation. The Mill Pond and adjacent wetlands should be enhanced as a demonstration of the importance of greenway extensions into the downtown core. Enhancement of foot paths and passive recreational use of this area should be encouraged for the benefit of those living in the immediate neighborhood and to enhance the vision of Durham's special relationship with its fresh- and saltwater bodies. Sightings of rare and endangered species have been recorded in the College Brook greenway and Mill Pond area. The fact that unusual and important wildlife sightings can take place immediately adjacent to the Town's commercial core is of great importance to the sense of the Town of Durham as a place where modern presence can exist in concert with nature (4.24).”

“Pedestrian access to the Mill Pond may be encouraged with downtown displays of footpaths such as the pedestrian path to the pond from Main Street and Mill Road through the Mill Plaza to the footpath through the woods that connects with Chesley Drive. This route should be enhanced as a pedestrian gateway to the Mill Pond (4.25).”

“Chesley Drive should specifically be *excluded* from evaluation as an option for improved access to Mill Plaza for the following reasons ... (3.14)”

AIA's Ten Principles on Living Communities:

“7. *Create a Neighborhood Identity.* A ‘sense of place’ gives neighborhoods a unique character, enhances the walking environment, and creates pride in the community.

8. *Protect Environmental Resources.* A well-designed balance of nature and development preserves natural systems, protects waterways from pollution, reduces air pollution, and protects property values.

9. *Conserve Landscapes.* Open space, farms, and wildlife habitat are essential for environmental, recreational, and cultural reasons.”

Public Comments, Letters & E-Mails:

We have received several letters from Plaza neighbors and also UNH Natural Resources faculty expressing concern about College Brook and the hope that it would be protected and restored in any redevelopment. Many residents – echoing the language in the Master Plan – place a high value on the College Brook greenway as it represents a slice of nature in the heart of our downtown.

8. Civic Elements

Mill Plaza Committee Council Charge (Res # 2006-25):

“1. The development of a future vision for the Mill Plaza site. This vision may take into consideration abutting parcels as determined appropriate by the committee.

C) Creating a community gathering space (such as a village green, park, Public Library, municipal office complex, etc.) in the downtown area for Durham residents, students, staff, and faculty at the University of New Hampshire to interact with one another in positive ways specifically designed to foster a sense of community and place in Durham.

“3. To examine whether there would be potential economic and social benefits associated with the construction of a municipal Library, Town Office complex, and/or parking facility (either publicly or privately owned) in conjunction with the redevelopment of the Mill Plaza site.”

Public Comments, Letters & E-Mails:

Although one resident dismissed the notion of a library or a city hall on the Plaza Property, which he contended is prime commercial space, others expressed hope the town would establish a new library on the property. One resident cited Dover’s McConnell Center and the new Portsmouth Library as examples of civic centers that can add value to their surroundings.

9. Fiscal Enhancement

Mill Plaza Committee Council Charge (Res # 2006-25):

“1. A) Increasing the taxable value of the Mill Plaza site. This plan may include a combination of retail space, office space, and rental housing stock, or any other combination of offerings, as determined by the committee and permitted by zoning.

B) Broadening the variety of, and square footage available for, retail businesses in the downtown area which would appeal to the permanent residents of the Town.”

10. Parking

Durham Master Plan 2000:

“Provide parking areas in the downtown that accommodate the retail and commercial needs, maximize number of parking spaces, move traffic through efficiently, are well landscaped, and blend with the desired character of downtown (3.9).”

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR THE MILL PLAZA PROJECT 7/11/07

<p>Mill Plaza Study Community Principles *</p> <p>1. Open Process: The redevelopment should result from a genuine, thorough, and public conversation with Durham residents and should be brought to reality – taking the public’s recommendations to heart – in a timely fashion.</p> <p>2. Community-Oriented Space: The redevelopment should provide year-round community space – indoor and outdoor space where people linger to meet and talk to their friends, to shop and to enjoy all of the seasons.</p> <p>3. Mixed Uses: The redevelopment should provide – in addition to an expanded grocery store – a variety of shops, stores and offices, and a variety of housing opportunities for families, including UNH students, faculty, and staff.</p> <p>4. Linkage: The redevelopment should link visually and spatially with Main Street, as well as Mill Road and the UNH campus, to encourage pedestrian flow between town, campus, and the adjoining neighborhoods.</p> <p>5. Balanced Access: The redevelopment should strike a balance among automobile, bicycle, transit, and pedestrian access to the site that ensures the commercial viability of businesses on the property and protects the integrity of the bordering Faculty neighborhood. This balance should include optimal integration of the site into the local street network.</p> <p>6. Quality Design: The redevelopment should stand out as uniquely attractive through a design that embraces the principles of sustainability and green building – and complements its surroundings, from the Main Street and campus on one end, to the brook and quiet residential neighborhood on the other.</p> <p>7. College Brook Buffer: The redevelopment should restore, enhance, and protect College Brook and its wooded buffer to benefit the ecology, add natural beauty to the property, and improve and strengthen the boundary between the core downtown and the bordering residential neighborhood.</p> <p>8. Civic Elements: The redevelopment could include a new permanent town library and town hall. The purchase of adjoining land could be considered for these uses.</p> <p>9. Fiscal Enhancement: The redevelopment should broaden the town’s tax base through both the commercial and aesthetic value it adds to our community.</p> <p>10. Parking: The redevelopment should include adequate short and long-term parking for customers, employees, and residents of apartments constructed on the Mill Plaza property. Additional parking to serve downtown Durham could be explored.</p>	<p>AIA150 Principles for Livable Communities ** AIA 2030 Carbon Neutral Criteria ***</p> <p>Use of consensus process to convene; clarify responsibilities; deliberate; decide; and implement agreements</p> <p>(6) Build Vibrant Public Spaces: Citizens need welcoming, well-defined public places to stimulate face-to-face interaction, collectively celebrate and mourn, encourage civic participation, admire public art, and gather for public events.</p> <p>(2) Provide Choices: People want variety in housing, shopping, recreation, transportation, and employment. Variety creates lively neighborhoods and accommodates residents in different stages of their lives.</p> <p>(3) Encourage Mixed-Use Development: Integrating different land uses and varied building types creates vibrant, pedestrian-friendly and diverse communities.</p> <p>(1) Design on a Human Scale: Compact, pedestrian-friendly communities allow residents to walk to shops, services, cultural resources, and jobs and can reduce traffic congestion and benefit people’s health.</p> <p>(5) Vary Transportation Options: Giving people the option of walking, biking and using public transit, in addition to driving, reduces traffic congestion, protects the environment and encourages physical activity.</p> <p>(10) Design Matters: Design excellence is the foundation of successful and healthy communities.</p> <p>Create a Neighborhood Identity: A “sense of place” gives neighborhoods a unique character; enhances the walking environment, and creates pride in the community.</p> <p>(8) Protect Environmental Resources: A well-designed balance of nature and development preserves natural systems, protects waterways from pollution, reduces air pollution, and protects property values.</p> <p>(9) Conserve Landscapes: Open space, farms, and wildlife habitat are essential for environmental, recreational, and cultural reasons.</p> <p>(4) Preserve Urban Centers: Restoring, revitalizing, and infilling urban centers takes advantage of existing streets, services and buildings and avoids the need for new infrastructure. This helps to curb sprawl and promote stability for city neighborhoods.</p>	<p>LEED For Neighborhood Development ****</p> <p>Community Outreach and Involvement</p> <p>Access to Public Spaces’ Accessibility Outreach and Involvement</p> <p>Diversity of Uses Development Housing and Jobs Proximity Sales and Rental Housing</p> <p>Smart Location Walkable Streets</p> <p>Walkable Street Automobile Dependence Transit Facilities</p> <p>Integrated design and development at the neighborhood scale.</p> <p>Site Design for Habitat or Wetlands Conservation</p> <p>Access to Surrounding Vicinity Preferred Location</p> <p>Innovation in Design:</p> <p>Reduced Parking Footprint</p>
--	--	--

- Construction Pollution Prevention
- LEED Certified Green Buildings
- Energy Efficiency in Buildings
- Reduced Water Use
- Building Reuse and Adaptive Reuse
- Minimize Site Disturbance through Site Design
- Minimize Site Disturbance during Construction
- Stormwater Management
- Heat Island Reduction
- Solar Orientation
- On-Site Energy Generation
- On-Site Renewable Energy Sources
- District Heating & Cooling
- Infrastructure Energy Efficiency
- Wastewater Management
- Recycled Content for Infrastructure
- Construction Waste Management
- Comprehensive Waste Management
- Light Pollution Reduction
- LEED® Accredited Professional

MPSOC Final Report

*Communities Vision Principles adopted by the
Town Council on 6/18/07

* Ten principals for Liveable Communities
created by the American Institute of Architects

* Goal for building to be Carbon Neutral by 2030

***** LEED-Neighborhood Development
A pilot high performance integrated design process
created by the US Green Building Council LEED
(Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)
www.usgbc.org/leed/nd

IV. Concept Designs and Summaries

This section of our report comprises the outstanding design work conducted over the course of our study by our partnering AIA150 design teams. The following drawings were presented at three separate workshops heavily attended by the public. The teams' qualitative descriptions, design assumptions and drawings follow below.

Round 1 – September 8, 2007

- ✓ All 3 design teams worked independently resulting in 4 different design concepts
- ✓ All 3 teams were given this basic minimum Program for existing and proposed uses developed with the MPC 8/4/07 but they could add space if they felt the site could accommodate it.
- ✓ Teams could choose to use just Plaza and Varsity Capital properties or add the Kyreages property in the design concepts

EXISTING	PROPOSED		
FUNCTION	GSF	GSF	Parking Code
RETAIL			
Grocery Store	19,000	25,000	1/250 to 5.5/1000 **
Bagelry	2,900	2,000	1/100 sf seat+1/emp
Drug Store	8,640	8,640	1/250 sf
Federal Credit	3,000	3,000	1/250 sf
Healthsouth	1,820	1,820	1/250 sf seat+1/emp
Cleaners	400	400	1/250 sf
Pizza	1,000	1,000	1/100 sf seat+1/emp
China Buffet	3,000	3,000	1/100 sf seat+1/emp
Zylas	4,800	4,800	1/250 sf
Uppercut	1,200	1,200	1/250 sf
Video Store	1,600	1,600	1/250 sf
Sub Shop	1,400	1,400	1/100 sf seat+1/emp
Federal Savings	2,000	2,000	1/250 sf
LIBRARY	2,964	12,500	1/500 gsf
TOWN HALL	na	20,000	1/250gsf
NEW RETAIL	na	TBD	1/250
NEW OFFICES	na	TBD	1/400
NEW HOUSING	na	TBD	2 spaces/unit or
			.75/res or .5/res*

*UNH uses .5 pkg sp/student res.

** Hannafords prefers 5.0 sp/1000gsf

MIDNIGHT OIL TEAM, THE VILLAGE STREET CONCEPT 9/8/07

- ✓ This team used The Mill Plaza lands as well as the Varsity Capital and Kyreages lands

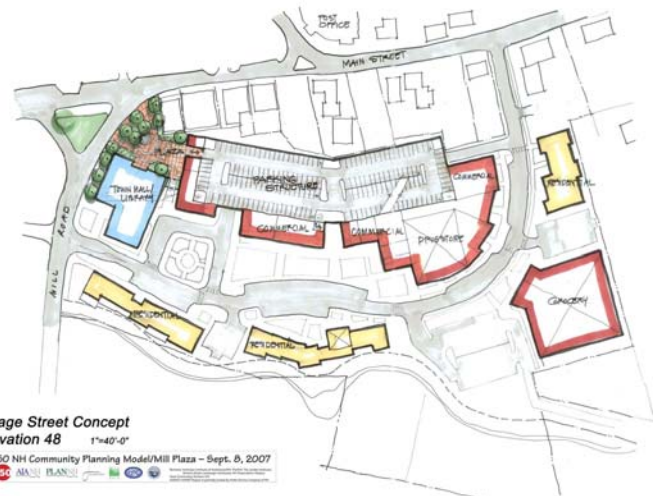
The driving belief behind the Village Street Concept is that Durham needs more “downtown”. Currently much of downtown Durham is one-sided with commercial and retail space generally on the north side of Main Street with a short section of retail/commercial on the south side for about 100 yards. This new

concept introduces a street that enters the site from Mill Road approximately 75’ north of the current plaza entry and loops up to Main Street

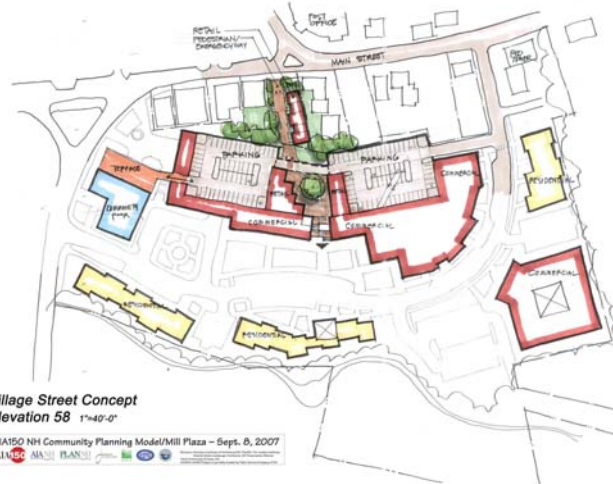
approximately across from St. George’s Episcopal Church. New commercial, retail and housing can be developed along the street increasing the level of activity downtown to a significant degree. New pedestrian links between the new development and Main Street create additional opportunities for lively public spaces and events as well as knitting together the existing

Main Street businesses and the new street, retail and commercial offerings and housing. In addition, Town Hall and the Library have been relocated to a site at the intersection of Mill Road and Main Street adjacent to Bicentennial Park.

The site plans are presented in layers beginning at a point approximately equal to the southern edge of the existing plaza parking lot (elevation 38). This site plan depicts the new street with on-street parking and new first floor retail including an expanded Durham Marketplace and a new Rite Aid. A natural buffer has been shown adjacent to College Brook as well as less intense retail. Key to the development of the site is the construction of a new parking structure. The different site plan levels show the parking structure either buried in the slope to the north of the site or “wrapped” in new retail at this level and new retail, commercial and finally housing at subsequent levels.

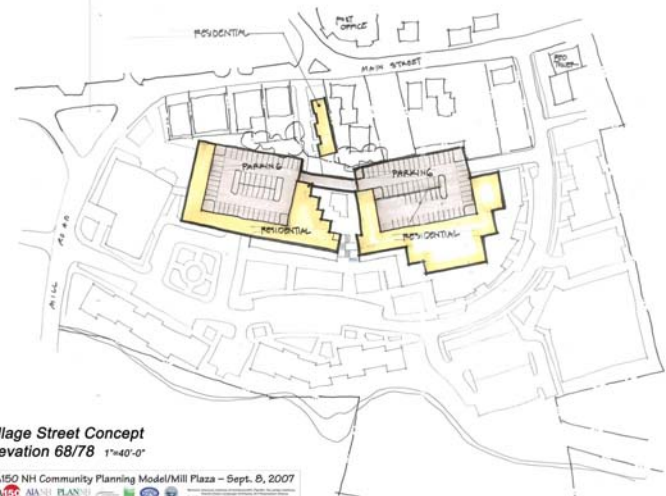


The next level up (elevation 48) aligns with the intersection of Main Street and Mill Road. This plan depicts the new Town Offices and the Library at this intersection as well as an expanded Bicentennial Park that would function as a public space tying together Main Street businesses, Memorial Park and the civic component of the new development. A second level of retail/commercial against the parking structure over the first floor retail and a level of housing over the retail at the brook are also introduced at this level.



The next level (elevation 58) aligns with the Grange at the intersection of Main Street and Madbury Road. At this intersection a major pedestrian link is introduced that would allow for a flow of people between the site and Main Street bringing them by newly developed retail both on the Grange site and at the parking structure.

The final plan (elevation 68 and 78) depicts housing clustered around the top level of the parking structure. The site section – a cross-section cut through the site – has been taken through the new Grange link, parking structure, ground level public space at elevation 38 and the retail/housing adjacent to the buffer at College Brook. This section also shows the relative relationship of the existing buildings at Main Street through the site to the residences on Faculty Road.



Square footages developed in this scheme are:

Commercial/Retail/Office	231,000
Library/town Hall	22,000
Housing	<u>90,000</u>
	343,000 sq.ft
Parking:	
Surface	137
Garage	<u>600</u>

737 parking spaces



LAVALLEE BRENSINGER TEAM (LBPA) 9/8/07

✓ Team chose to include the Varsity Capital land but not the Kyreages property

Benefits of this plan include an attempt to “widen” the Main Street corridor by creating a building “pad” over the parking garage, which would allow for individual building sites. It also suggested some less dense housing as a buffer between the existing residential neighborhoods as well as a civic building location at the corner of Mill Road and Main Street. This scheme also has a loop road thru the site but is much less direct than in other schemes and it exits at the border of the Kyreages property.

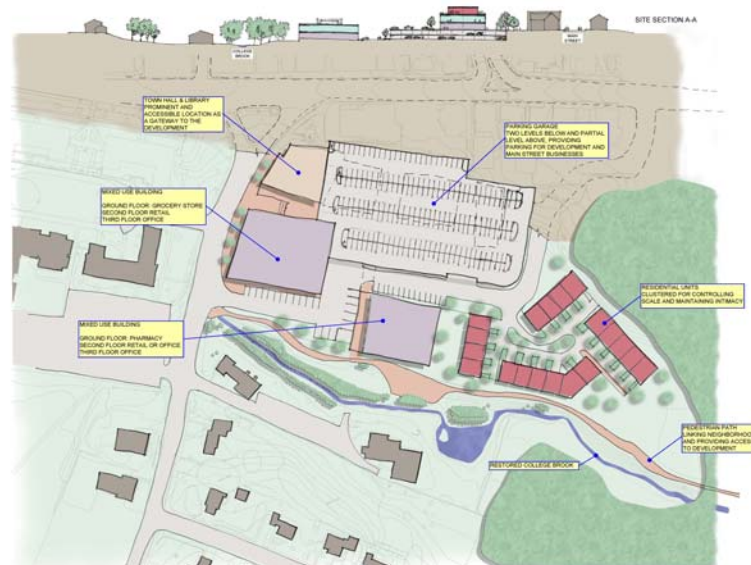


UPPER LEVEL PLAN
 Lavallee Brensinger ARCHITECTS
 AIA150 NH Community Planning Model/Mill Plaza – Sept. 8, 2007

Square footages developed in this scheme are:

Commercial/Retail	55,000
Office	32,000
Library/town Hall	48,000
Housing	<u>90,000</u> (70-80 units) 225,000sq.ft

Parking: 450-500 parking spaces



LOWER LEVEL PLAN
 Lavallee Brensinger ARCHITECTS
 AIA150 NH Community Planning Model/Mill Plaza – Sept. 8, 2007

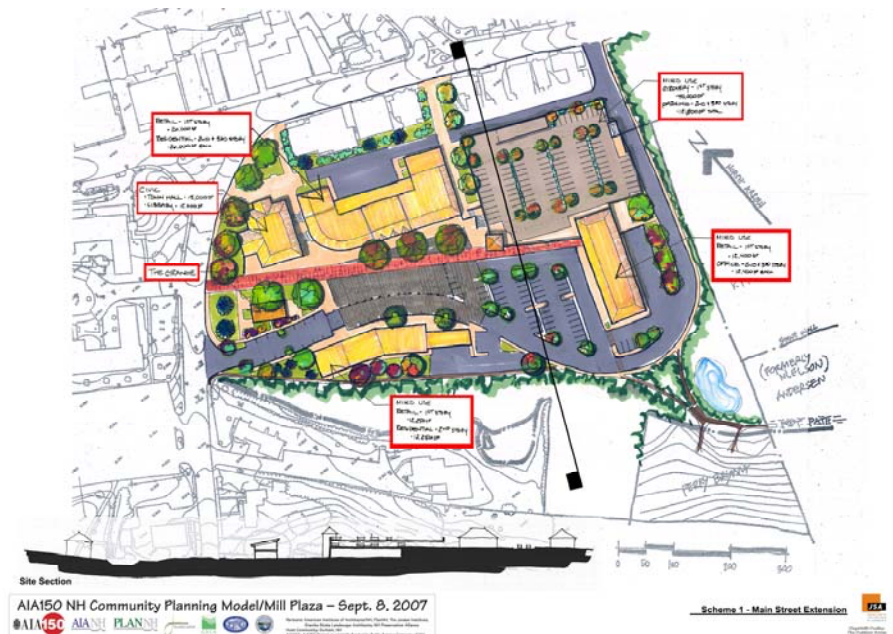
JSA TEAM 9/8/07

- ✓ Team chose to include the Varsity Capital land but not to include the Kyreages property
- ✓ Team provided two very different schemes. One is called the “Main Street Extension and the other the” Urban Plaza”.

The **Main Street Extension** scheme provides multiple access points from the Mill Plaza site to Durham’s Main Street. A new access road connects the historic buildings on Main Street to the Plaza. This road supports the concept of a small New England shopping Village targeting families.

An entrance plaza supports multiple town activities including seasonal events such as entertainment and market festivals. Removable bollards can adapt a pedestrian area for temporary vehicular access to provide for a public stage.

A recreational trail follows College Brook. Several nodes along the path give bicycle and pedestrian access between the retail shops and the plaza beyond. The site supports strong access corridors for pedestrian use in filtering through the site into either the downtown or residential areas.



A covered parking garage connected by a vertical circulation tower links Main Street to the plaza below. The garage is three stories with the Durham Marketplace occupying the bottom level. A visually permeable exterior façade provides daylight to the interior space.

Square footages developed in this scheme are:

Commercial/retail	90,000
Office	24,800
Library/Town Hall	30,000
Housing	65,000 (about 65 units)
	209,800 sq. ft

Parking:	Surface 110
	Garage 190
	300 parking spaces

The Urban Plaza Scheme

The modular design of the residential and retail space easily allows for phased construction and versatile future adaptation and exchange between retail and residential programs.

Smaller clusters of public green space arranged as quadrangles along the mixed-use corridor promote an interactive village concept

Civic buildings, the Town Hall and Library are located at the corner of Main Street and Mill Road. The Town Hall is located on an open plaza and the library has been pulled away from the residential and retail to provide visual prominence from Main Street and the Mill Plaza Site.

Access to the downtown and newly developed plaza has been increased. A pedestrian pathway along College Brook and walkways filtering through the site serve as access paths to connect the residential neighborhood, the plaza and the existing downtown. The site entry has been moved away from the College Brook to align with existing UNH entry point.

A raised parking structure immediately above the primary retail space creates ample parking for the plaza as well as the Main Street shops and restaurants. Surface parking is also available for the market and the surrounding shops and services at the plaza level. Below grade parking is also provided in the modules for the residential and mixed-use buildings.



Square footages developed in this scheme are:

Commercial/retail	52,000
Office	10,000
Library/Town Hall	32,000
Housing	<u>81,000</u> (about 65-80 units)
	175,000 sq.ft.

Parking:	Surface	150
	Garage	150
	In mixed use units	<u>80</u>
		380 parking spaces

Round 2 – November 4, 2007

- ✓ All 3 Design teams worked independently resulting in 3 different design concepts
- ✓ The Space program for this round of designs did not substantially change but the teams were encouraged to retain the Durham Marketplace and possibly the drug store in their present locations and to add square footage to their existing footprints.
- ✓ They were also encouraged to increase the amount of surface parking adjacent to these stores
- ✓ They also responded to the recommendations of the real estate economic advisors to keep the corner of Mill Road and Mains Street as a site for retail rather than civic buildings
- ✓ The Teams were restricted to use only the Mill plaza and the Varsity Capital lands

MIDNIGHT OIL TEAM, THE VILLAGE STREET CONCEPT 11/4/07

This team retained much of the quality and feel of their Round 1 Scheme but reduce the scope to meet the reduced land area. The plan retained the grocery store in its present location but moved the drug store to a location at the other end of an attached parking structure. They wrapped retail/commercial uses around the Mill Road frontage to expand downtown beyond just a “strip” of commercial uses. They also increased the amount of surface parking near the grocery and drug stores.

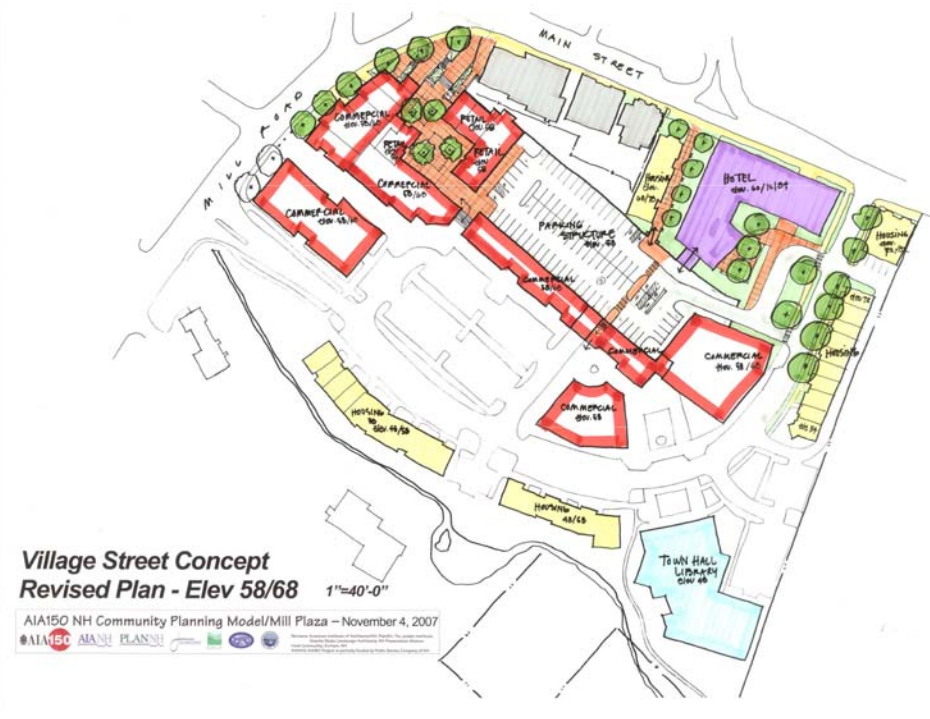


They maintained housing and retail on both sides of their Village Street to enhance that concept and gave the Library/Town Hall a prominent site as the focal point of both the Main Street and Mill Road entrances.

Square footages developed in this scheme are:

Commercial/retail	113,000	
Office	60,000	
Library/Town Hall	34,000	
Hotel	60,000	
Housing	57,000	(about 50+units)
	<u>324,000</u>	sq.ft

Parking:	Surface	240
	Garage	260
		<u>500 parking spaces</u>



LAVALLEE BRENSINGER TEAM (LBPA) 11/4/07

This team also left the grocery/drug stores essentially in place, wrapped them with additional store fronts and added more retail on Mill Road to continue its retail/commercial façade. The Town Hall/Library was placed in the southeast corner of the site again acting as a focal point for both the Mill Road and Main Street entries.

The site development here could be phased, with the grocery and drug store staying in place and expanding allowing for tenants from the other existing buildings on the site to relocate to new quarters in the additional store fronts on Mill Road. That second building could then be demolished and denser development could take place on the eastern portion of the site. The loop road connecting Main Street and Mill Roads could also be phased. Its eventual egress point on Main Street would be at Madbury Road where a roundabout might be located in lieu of a traffic light.

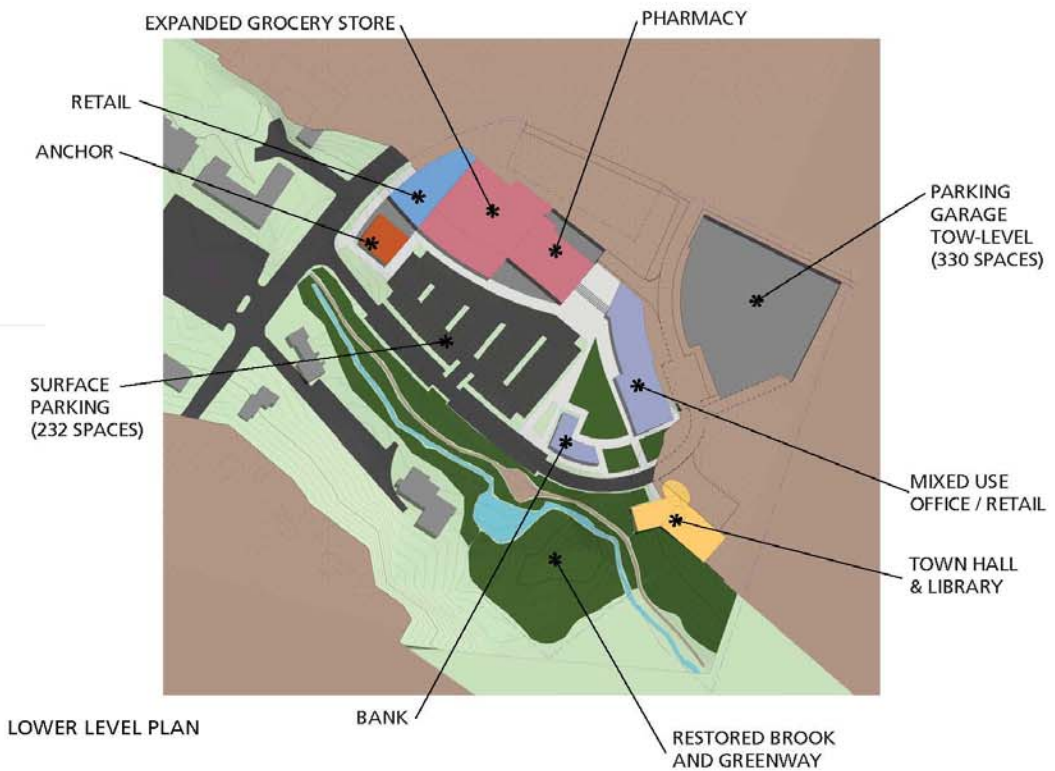
Square footages developed in this scheme are:

Commercial/retail	81,000
Office/Flex space	103,000
Library/Town Hall	32,000
Hotel	58,000
Housing	<u>00,000</u>
	274,000 sq.ft

Parking:	Surface 232
	<u>Garage 330</u>
	562 Parking spaces

Related concept drawings follow on next two pages

SITE PLANS

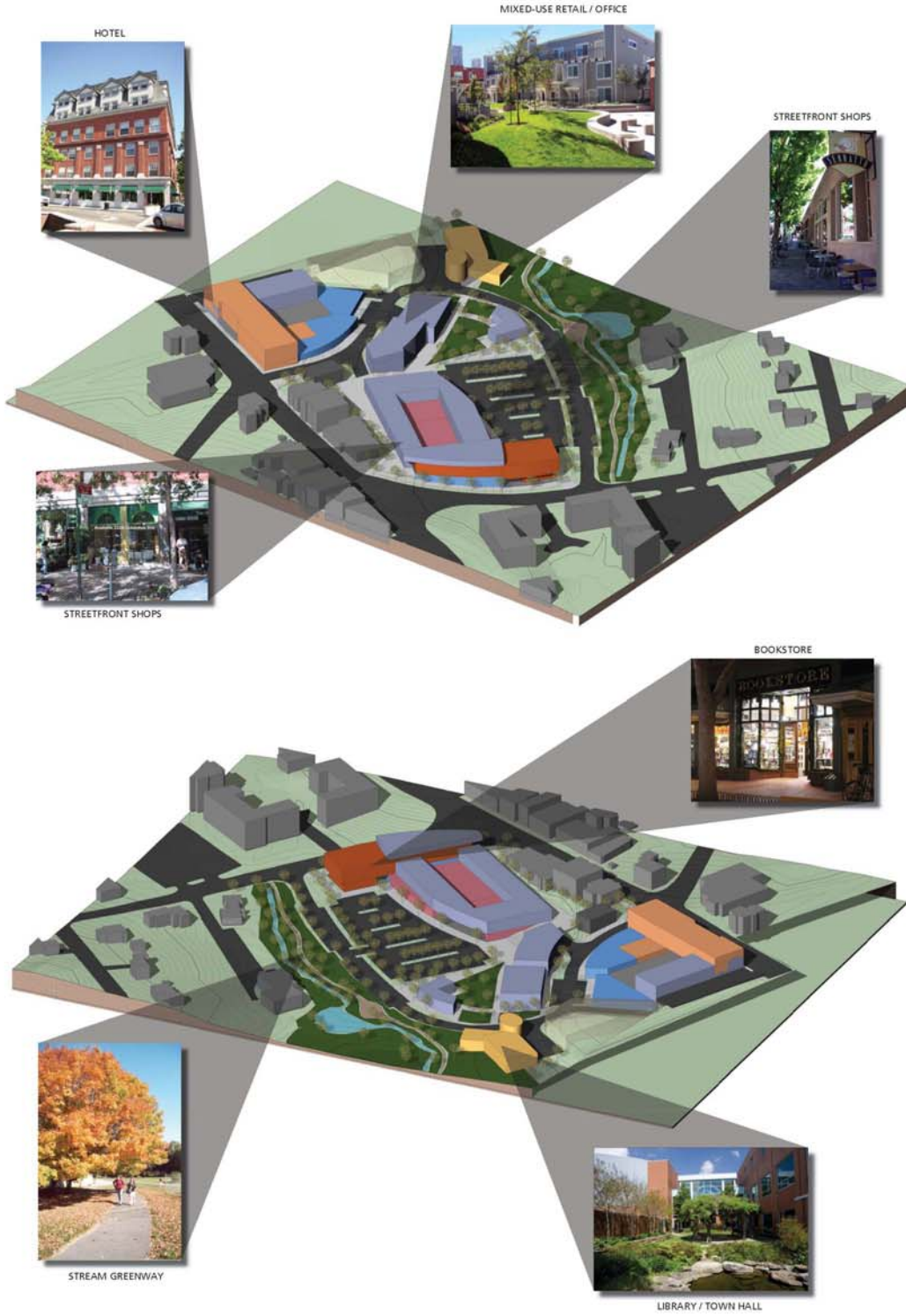


COMMUNITY PLANNING MODEL / MILL PLAZA - NOVEMBER 4, 2007



Partners: American Institute of Architects/NH, PlanNH, The Jordan Institute, Granite State Landscape Architects, NH Preservation Alliance
 Host Community: Durham, NH
 AIA/NH's AIA150 Project is partially funded by Public Service Company of NH

AERIAL VIEWS AND CHARACTER IMAGES



COMMUNITY PLANNING MODEL / MILL PLAZA - NOVEMBER 4, 2007



Partners: American Institute of Architects/NH, PlanNH, The Jordan Institute, Granite State Landscape Architects, NH Preservation Alliance
 Host Community: Durham, NH
 AIA/NH's AIA150 Project is partially funded by Public Service Company of NH

JSA TEAM 11/4/07

This scheme clearly divides the site into two or possibly three Phases. The first Phase keeps the existing Grocery/drugstore in place with façade modifications and some expansion. It also maintains the high density of surface parking in front of these retail establishments. This would present little difference from the existing plaza except for some “dressing up” of the existing facilities.



AIA150 NH Community Planning Model/Mill Plaza – Nov. 4, 2007



The second Phase has a loop road, which passed through the Garage at the eastern edge of the site and has a higher density of buildings and uses. This scheme really suggests a third Phase, where Phase one is rebuilt in the future with higher densities and structured parking.

Square footages developed in this scheme are:

Commercial/retail	64,000
Office/Flex space	37,000
Library/Town Hall	35,000
Hotel	64,000
Housing	<u>00,000</u>
	200,000 sq.ft

Parking:	Surface	210
	<u>Garage</u>	<u>324</u>
		534 Parking spaces



PHASE 2 - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

AIA150 NH Community Planning Model/Mill Plaza – Nov. 4, 2007



ROUND THREE – 2/20/08

- ✓ The 3 design teams worked together on this round producing 1 “hybrid” design scheme
- ✓ The space program for this round of designs deleted The Town Hall from the requirements
- ✓ The teams were encouraged to use their own judgment as to the retention of the Durham Marketplace in its present location
- ✓ They were also encouraged to increase the amount of surface parking adjacent to the retail stores
- ✓ The teams were restricted to use only the Mill Plaza and the Varsity Capital lands

MIDNIGHT OIL – LBPA – JSA “HYBRID” SCHEME

This design scheme tried to incorporate all of the ideas that the previous design rounds had found to be most workable and desirable based on input from the community and College Brook Study, economic studies, traffic concerns, and the best information we could glean from the owner and his tenants.



This scheme includes a loop road, which could be either public or private, that connect the Plaza with Main Street enhancing the downtown connection. This road exits at the Madbury Road intersection which may be controlled through a roundabout which is preferable to a traffic light. The road also follows along the set back from the College Brook, creating a parklike buffer between the development and the residential

neighborhood and also offering some retention/detention areas to maintain “best practices” for storm water drainage.

It relocates the grocery store which allows for the maximum flexibility in site design. It tucks a parking garage into the hill between Main Street and the Plaza, offering the best disguise for such a structure. It wraps commercial development around from Main Street to Mill Road maintaining a 3-story profile similar to Main Street and complimentary to the UNH buildings. It locates a Library at the southeast corner of the site, which effectively shuts off access to Chesley Drive but also allows the Library to visually access the Pinto and Perry lands, which will stay unbuilt, as they are wetlands, and subject to flooding.

The Scheme also offers a variety of pedestrian and bicycle access points drawing people in from Main Street, Mill Road and the residential neighborhoods. Bus access can also be accommodated utilizing the free UNH bus system.

As this Scheme went through its public presentation, it was critiqued by the public and some of the Plaza tenants. Those valuable comments would modify this scheme by:

- ✓ Moving or reconfiguring the grocery store in a way that eliminates a possible “alley” between the store and the garage, also allowing for more surface parking in front the grocery store.
- ✓ Creating a covered loading area parallel with the road, which would allow trucks to pull in, unload and leave without any major turning motions. This would also keep the noise and lights from this activity sheltered from the neighborhood. This area might also be used for dumpsters, again presuming adequate screening from public view.
- ✓ Deleting the Inn, as it is not on the owner’s land, and possibly adding more housing to the mix of uses on the Plaza site.

Square footages developed in this scheme are:

Grocery Store	26,500
Drug Store	12,000
Other Commercial/retail	84,000
Office/Housing	36,000
Library	13,000
Hotel	<u>60,000</u>
	231,500 sq.ft

Parking:	Surface	116
	Garage	296
	Under Inn	<u>100</u>
		512 parking spaces