

Humoresque (Merchants Plaza) Conversion to Residential Housing



Merchants Plaza is a landmark building located at the busy intersection of Columbus Ave and Old Dover Rd in Rochester, NH. The building was built in 1901 for use as a "trolley garage" to repair and store trolleys during the early 1900's. In order to accommodate such intensive use, the building was designed and built to standards that far exceeded the structural requirements of typical buildings of that period.

With the advent of the automobile in the early-mid 1900's the trolley system in Rochester became obsolete as did the "trolley garage" and the building was converted to the Humoresque which was used as a roller skating rink and concert/function hall until 1980 when the owners shut down the business and used the facility for their commercial storage needs.

The building got a third lease on life in the early 1990's when a small investment group converted the facility into commercial office spaces and was quickly occupied by community business people such as accountants, software designers, hair stylists, mental health counselors and a property management company.

In January of 2021, a new ownership group, Humoresque LLC, owned by Paul Delisle and Marc Delisle bought the property and they moved their property management company onto the first floor of the building. The Delisles were born and raised in Rochester, NH and they have extensive real estate holdings in and around the community. Early on the brothers saw that the commercial real estate was waning as the residential market was on the upswing – two factors that were exacerbated by the onset of Covid in 2019. The brothers have extensive experience in converting community commercial properties into residential units and have done six similar conversions over the past five years in Portsmouth, Somersworth and Rochester and they recognize that the Merchants Plaza building is a great candidate for such a conversion.



In preliminary meetings with the Rochester Planning Board, it appears as though this property can accommodate 11 residential units.

Scope of Work: Convert commercial rental units into affordable housing units. All units will be new construction with updated sprinkler system and each unit will be equipped with ultra efficient heat pump systems which will provide low cost heating and cooling for each tenant.

Merchants Plaza

Conversion of Office Space to Residential Rental Units

New Hampshire is in the midst of a severe housing crisis. According to New Hampshire Housing's October 2023 Residential Rental Survey, the state is currently 23,670 housing units short of meeting current demand and that number is expected to reach 90,000 units by 2040. In a recent article in NH Business Review, the editor cites a report by Up for Growth "[Housing Underproduction in the U.S. 2023](#)," contends that the true current housing shortage in NH is closer to 31,000 units. Strafford County has been particularly hard hit with a residential vacancy rate of only 0.9% which is in stark contrast with a healthy rate of 5% to 10%.

The current housing crisis is particularly bothersome considering that Rochester is experiencing unprecedented economic growth benefiting from the expansion of Sig Saur, Rochester Gaming, The Ridge Phase 2, etc. The City is in dire need of additional housing to meet the current demand and to support any future economic growth in the community.

Although new housing development is one potential solution to the housing crisis, the time and costs associated with new housing dampen the ability of the City to provide enough housing for current and future residents. Another solution is the re-purpose existing buildings to accommodate housing. Re-purposing existing buildings is often quicker and more cost effective than building new housing units and it brings new life to buildings that might be otherwise obsolete. For instance, the COVID crisis has accelerated a "work from home" trend which has significantly reduced the need for office space which is evidenced by over 100,000sf of vacant office space in Rochester and the neighboring community of Somersworth NH with one prime example being a 25,000sf vacancy at 95 S Main in Rochester.

With respect to the ongoing housing crisis and the need to repurpose existing buildings to residential, we are here to propose the conversion of vacant office space at Merchants Plaza located at 1 Old Dover Rd to residential rental units. Merchants Plaza is a 2 story 12,000 building that currently houses several small businesses such as Tresses Hair Salon, Piccadilly Properties and Seacoast Behavioral. Our intent is to maintain the current approved use with a mix of commercial and residential units with a split of approximately 25% commercial use and 75% residential use. The residential use would be 11 converted units located on the rear of the first floor and on all of the second floor. The rent rate of the residential units will be priced at \$1,395 per month with is in line with the median 1 BR rental rate in Strafford County of \$1,394 per month (NH Housing Residential Rental Report Oct 2023). Moreover, each unit will be include water/waste costs and each will be equipped with updated HVAC units which will afford the tenants much more favorable utility rates as compared to the average utility rate of \$268 per month for 1 BR units in Strafford County.

We look forward to working with the City to provide safe, clean and efficient housing for the residents of Rochester as we experience this unprecedented growth.

Sincerely,

Paul Delisle

Marc Delisle



RESIDENTIAL SITE PLAN APPLICATION (townhouses, apts. etc.)
City of Rochester, New Hampshire

Date: 10/27/2023 Is a conditional use needed? Yes: No: ✓ Unclear:
(If so, we encourage you to submit an application as soon as possible.)

Property information

Tax map #: 132 ; Lot #(s): 41 ; Zoning district: Neighborhood Mixed Use

Property address/location: 1 Old Dover Rd

Name of project (if applicable): Residential Conversion

Size of site: acres; overlay zoning district(s)?

Property owner

Name (include name of individual): Humoresque LLC, Paul Delisle

Mailing address: 1 Old Dover Rd Ste 2, Rochester NH

Telephone #: 603-502-2771 Email: Delisle470@gmail.com

Applicant/developer (if different from property owner)

Name (include name of individual): Same

Mailing address:

Telephone #: Email:

Engineer/designer

Name (include name of individual): Same

Mailing address:

Telephone #: Fax #:

Email address: Professional license #:

Proposed use

(You are not bound by information on bedrooms and type of ownership unless that is a condition of approval.)

Total number of proposed dwelling units: 13 ; number of existing dwelling units: 0

Proposed bedrooms/unit: 1 1/2 ; total number of proposed bedrooms: 13

New building(s)? _____ addition(s)/modifications to existing building(s)? ☒
Townhouses/rowhouses: _____ flats: ☒ duplexes: _____ freestanding detached units: _____
Proposed ownership - leasehold: _____ fee simple conveyance: _____ condominiums: _____

Utility information

City water? yes ☒ no _____; How far is City water from the site? _____
City sewer? yes ☒ no _____; How far is City sewer from the site? _____
If City water, what are the estimated total daily needs? _____ gallons per day
Where will stormwater be discharged? _____

Other information

parking spaces: existing: 60 total proposed: —; Are there pertinent covenants? NO
Describe existing conditions/use (vacant land?): _____

Check any that are proposed: variance _____; special exception _____; conditional use _____
Wetlands: Is any fill proposed? NO; area to be filled: _____; buffer impact? _____

Proposed <u>post-development</u> disposition of site (should total 100%)		
	Square footage	% overall site
Building footprint(s) – give for each building		
Parking and vehicle circulation		
Planted/landscaped areas (excluding drainage)		
Natural/undisturbed areas (excluding wetlands)		
Wetlands		
Other – drainage structures, outside storage, etc.		

Comments

Please feel free to add any comments, additional information, or requests for waivers here: No Changes to the disposition of Site

Submission of application

This application must be signed by the property owner, applicant/developer (if different from property owner), and/or the agent.

I (we) hereby submit this Site Plan application to the City of Rochester Planning Board pursuant to the City of Rochester Site Plan Regulations and attest that to the best of my knowledge all of the information on this application form and in the accompanying application materials and documentation is true and accurate. As applicant/developer (if different from property owner)/as agent, I attest that I am duly authorized to act in this capacity.

Signature of property owner: 

Date: 10/27/23

Signature of applicant/developer: 

Date: 10/27/23

Signature of agent: 

Date: _____

Authorization to enter subject property

I hereby authorize members of the Rochester Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Conservation Commission, Planning Department, and other pertinent City departments, boards and agencies to enter my property for the purpose of evaluating this application including performing any appropriate inspections during the application phase, review phase, post-approval phase, construction phase, and occupancy phase. This authorization applies specifically to those particular individuals legitimately involved in evaluating, reviewing, or inspecting this specific application/project. It is understood that these individuals must use all reasonable care, courtesy, and diligence when entering the property.

Signature of property owner: 

Date: 10/27/23

Site Plan Checklist (residential and nonresidential)

**To be filled out by applicant/agent (with notes to be inserted by staff)*

See regulations for other specific requirements

City of Rochester Planning & Development Department

Project Name: Residential Conversion Map: 132 Lot: 41 Date: _____

Applicant/agent: Paul Delisle Signature: [Signature]

(Staff review by: _____ Date: _____)

General items

	Yes	No	N/A	Waiver Requested	Comments
<u>4</u> sets completed application	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Total application fee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<u>4</u> copies of narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<u>3</u> sets of full-size plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<u>2</u> sets of 11 X 17 reductions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Completed abutters list	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Copy of existing covenants, easements, deed restrictions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Plan Information

Basic information including:

- Title sheet
- Name of Project
- Date
- North arrow
- Scale
- Legend
- Revision block
- Vicinity sketch -not less than 1" = 1,000'

Name and address of developer/applicant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Name, stamp, and NH license # of land survey, engineer, and/or architect	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
City tax map & lot #'s	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Notation on plans: "For more information about this site plan contact...."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

General items Continued

	Yes	No	N/A	Waiver Requested	Comments
Approval block (for signature by staff attesting to Planning Board approval)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
References to neighboring plans and subdivisions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Surveyed property lines including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• existing and proposed bearings• existing and proposed distances• pins, stakes, bounds• monuments• benchmarks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Include error of closure statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Information on abutting properties: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• owner name• owner address• tax map and lot #• square footage of lots• approximate building footprints• use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Zoning

Zoning designations of subject tract and in vicinity of tract	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Zoning requirements for district: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• frontage• lot dimensions/density• all setbacks• lot coverage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Zoning overlay districts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Existing Topographic Features:

Contour lines a (not to exceed two-foot Intervals, except on steep slopes) and spot elevations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Soil types and boundaries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Soil test pit locations, profiles, and Depth to water table and ledge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Percolation test locations and results	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Existing Topographic Features Continued:

	Yes	No	N/A	Waiver Requested	Comments
Water features (ponds, streams)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Wetlands including name of certified Wetlands scientist who delineated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Statement whether located in flood area, And if so, 100 year flood elevation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Delineation of trees and open areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Overview of types of trees and vegetation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Stone walls and archaeological features	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Locations of trails and paths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Other natural/cultural resources (productive farmland, habitats, scenic views, historic structures, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Building Information

Existing buildings/structures including square footage and use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Proposed building/structures including <ul style="list-style-type: none">• square footage• first floor elevation• use• # bedrooms per unit if residential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Elevation drawing of proposed buildings and structures as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showing all four sides• Drawn to scale with dimensions• Showing exterior materials• Showing exterior colors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Circulation and Parking Plans

Existing and proposed driveways and access points including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Width of opening• Turning radii• Cross section of driveway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Curbing & edge treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Traffic control devices, if appropriate:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Circulation and Parking Plans Continued:

	Yes	No	N/A	Waiver Requested	Comments
Number of parking spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none">• required by ordinance• proposed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Parking layout and dimensions of spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Handicap spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Loading area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Pedestrian circulation plan (including existing sidewalks in vicinity, if any)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Bicycle rack, if appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Buffers, landscaping & screening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Snow storage areas/plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Utilities

Show all pertinent existing and proposed profiles, elevations, materials, sizes, and details

Water lines/well (with protective radius)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Sewer lines/septic and leaching areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Pump stations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Stormwater management system: pipes, culverts,, catch basins detention/ retention basins, swales, rip rap, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Fire hydrant location(s) and details	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Electric, telephone, cable TV (underground or overhead)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Gas lines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Fire alarm connections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Treatment of solid waste (dumpsters?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Handling of oil, grease, chemicals hazardous materials/waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Landscaping Plan

	Yes	No	N/A	Waiver Requested	Comments
Demarcation of limits of construction, clear delineation of vegetation to be saved, and strategy for protecting vegetation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Proposed ground cover, shrubbery, and trees including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• botanical and common names• locations and spacing• total number of each species• size at installation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Planting plan (size of holes, depth of planting, soil amendments, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Irrigation: system? soaker hose? Manual? underground, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Protection of landscaping from vehicles (Curb stops, berm, railroad ties, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Specification all finished ground surfaces and edges (greenspace, mulch, asphalt, concrete, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Fencing/screening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<u>Signage</u>					
Location and type of signs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attached to building• Freestanding• Directional, if appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Dimensions of signs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Height• Area• Setback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Elevation drawings with colors & materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Type of Illumination, if proposed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

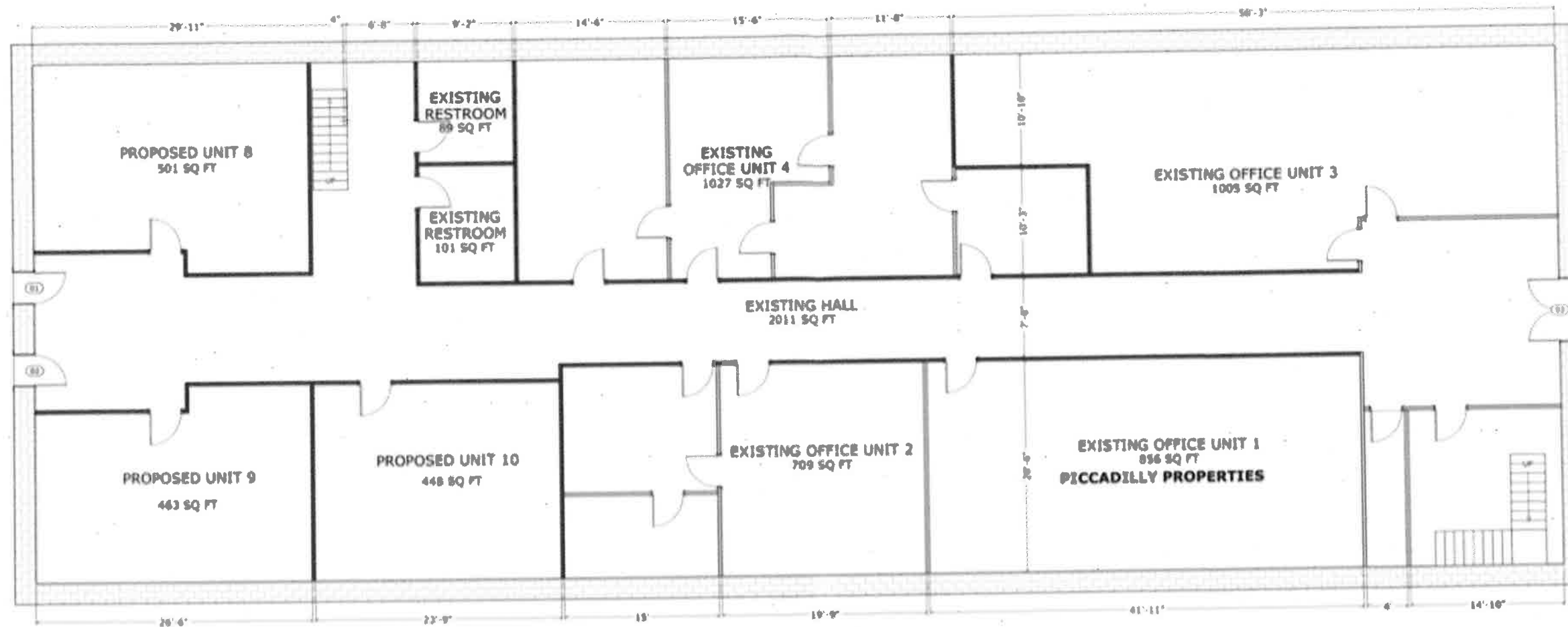
Outdoor Lighting

	Yes	No	N/A	Waiver Requested	Comments
Locations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Height of fixtures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Wattage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Type of light (high pressure sodium, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Design/cut sheets of fixtures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Illumination study, if appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Other Elements

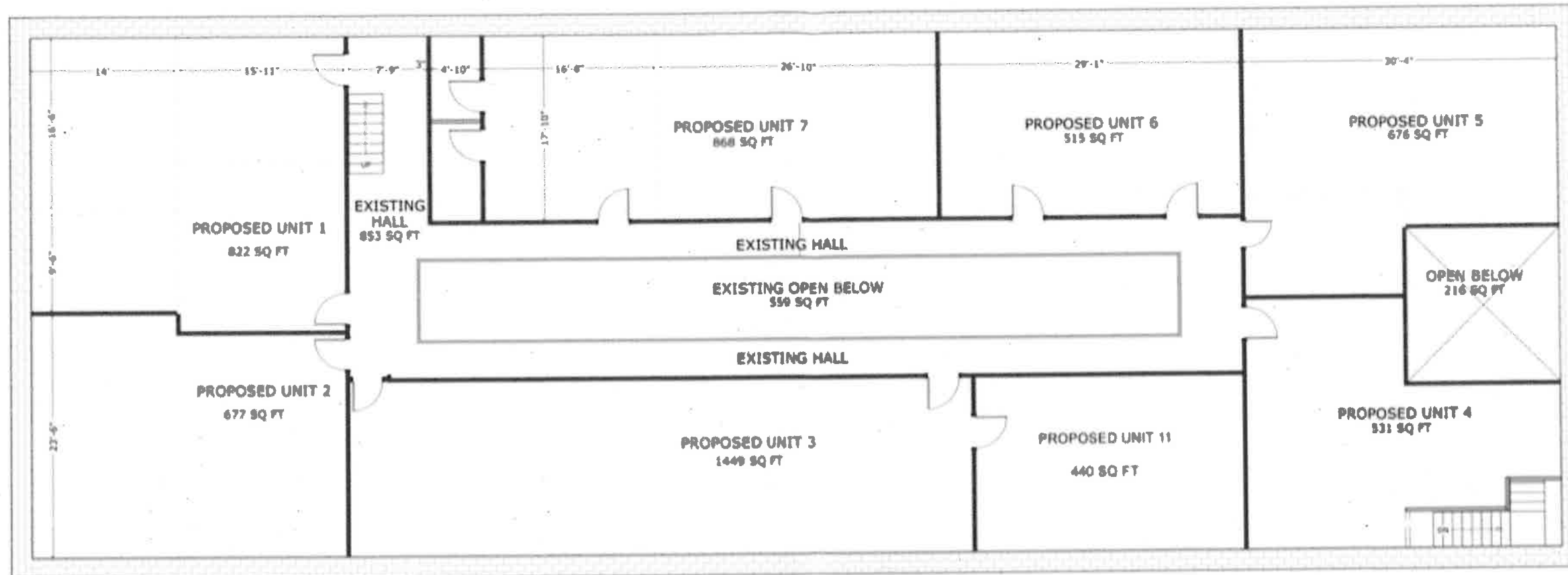
Traffic study, if appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Drainage study with calculations, storm Water impact analysis, and mitigation plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Grading plan (including finish grades)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Earth being removed from site(in cubic yards)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Erosion and sedimentation plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Proposed covenants, easements, And deed restrictions, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Fiscal impact study, if requested	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Additional Comments:



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
3/16" = 1'

Area Name	Floor	Area		
Residential Unit 1	2	822		
Residential Unit 2	2	677		
Residential Unit 3	2	1449		
Residential Unit 4	2	531		
Residential Unit 5	2	676	Total Second	
Residential Unit 6	2	515	Floor	
Residential Unit 7	1	868	9078	
Residential Unit 8	1	501		
Residential Unit 9	1	463	Total First Floor	
Residential Unit 10	1	468	1413	19.58% of 1st Floor
Residential Unit 11	1	440		
Existing Office Unit 1	1	856		
Existing Office Unit 2	1	709		
Existing Office Unit 3	1	1005		
Existing Office Unit 4	1	1027		
Existing Public Restrooms	1	190	Total First Floor	
Existing Common Hallways	1	2011	5798	80.42% of 1st Floor
Existing Common Hallways	2	853		
Existing Open Below Area	2	559	1412	



PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN
3/16"=1'

SJM Building & Remodeling Design
SJMREMODELINGDESIGN@GMAIL.COM
508.404.0791

PROPOSED SECOND
FLOOR PLAN

INTERIOR RENOVATION
1 OLD DOVER ROAD
ROCHESTER, NH.

STEVE
MAHONEY

DATE:
12/12/23
SCALE:
AS NOTED

PRINTED SHEET
6 of 8
PAGE #:
A-102

2 CONTINENTAL BLVD., ROCHESTER, NH 603-335-3946