

PR025
20171119
Conditional Use Findings Checklist

Section 5.4(B) General Standards

(1) Capacity of existing or planned community services or facilities.

With on-site water supply and on-site wastewater disposal, the project causes no increase in demand for these utility services. Systems will be replaced or updated to current standards and permitted VT DEC with enough capacity to meet the needs of the proposed uses.

The electrical systems of the buildings will reduce demand and generate electricity.

Within walking distance of an elementary school, the project may attract families with children, who would likely attend Chittenden East Supervisory Union schools, which has ample capacity for new students.

(2) Character of the area affected.

The immediate vicinity is characterized by village and woods, laced with trails. The proposed trail, connecting Pine Ridge Road with Browns River, reinforces the walkability of the area.

Residents will be able to walk to nearby destinations in Underhill Center, including a store, post office, town office, school and park.

By reusing an existing building and site, and continuing the predominately residential use, there will be little change in the site beyond the limits of construction. Trees will be retained to the greatest extent possible, and new tree species planted.

A three-unit building occupies a much smaller, and constrained, adjacent lot (PV015). Other nearby lots are even smaller and more densely developed.

“Character of the Area” is a specific term in the ULUDR, tightly " defined by zoning district purpose statements and clearly-stated goals, policies and objectives of the Underhill Town Plan that are specific to that area and/or the physical circumstances of development.” (ULUDR 11.2, p.193) For the purpose of character review, “Neighborhood” is effectively synonymous with “Area”, and they both refer to a zoning district.

The purpose of the Water Conservation zoning district is singularly "to protect the important gravel aquifer recharge area in Underhill Center.” (ULUDR, p.15).

There is description of land use in the Town Plan, which observes the broad presence of the uses which are proposed for this project, "Multifamily dwellings are allowed as a conditional use in all zoning districts except Soil & Water Conservation. Commercial operations exist in all zoning districts because of allowed conditional uses.” (p.18)

“Encourage multi-generational and multi-income residents by supporting planned residential and planned unit developments.” (Town Plan, p.47) The proposed multi-generational/multi-family use is consistent with the objectives of the town plan, and therefore the character of the area.

The Density Bonuses (ULUDR 9.6(A)(5), p.171) define 1600 square feet to be a small home, and 1200 square feet to be a small unit. There are very few homes in Underhill of this size. With this in mind, the project is not out-of-scale.

A survey of area sites shows development of similar size, that only serve a single family. The proposed barn is comparable to, or smaller than, several barns (KR014, RV133, RV263, RV172, RV097) in the Water Conservation district. This project will be space efficient, supporting the goal of maintaining the town’s rural character and the zoning district’s purpose of protecting the gravel aquifer recharge area.

(3) Traffic on roads and highways in the vicinity.

With two additional units, the project would add an estimated three cars. This is a negligible increase.

Located within walking distance of town hall, post office, parks and a store, and biking distance to a supermarket, library, commuter bus line, and other services, it is likely that many trips generated from the building will be on foot or by bicycle. It would be reasonable for someone live there without owning a car.

(4) Bylaws in effect.

The proposed conditional use of a residential building with home occupations is consistent with current bylaws and regulations. The buildings are planned to meet the dimensional requirements of the Water Conservation District. A wastewater system sufficient to handle the needs of the proposed uses will be designed, permitted and installed in a manner consistent with local and state regulations.

Consistent with the Road, Driveway and Trail Ordinance (RDTO), the driveway will meet geometric standards, including minimum curve radius of 35’ and maximum grade of 10%.

Intersection sight distance (335’ @ 30mph, Standard B-71) east of the driveway apron is obscured by a low bank and vegetation, but is otherwise excellent. The B-71 Standard can be met with some trimming and regrading.

As the driveway is relatively short, intentionally designed to discourage vehicle use, and ends at a single residential building, the applicant is requesting to construct the minimum traveled surface width of 12’. An approximately 48’x60’ turnaround exceeds the UJFD minimum recommendation. Minimally sloped, grassy 4’ shoulders along the driveway would allow large vehicles additional room for maneuvering.

(5) Utilization of renewable energy resources.

The buildings will be setback from property boundary lines by at least 25 feet on all sides. The buildings are lower than the surrounding tree canopy and hillsides. Solar access will not be interfered with by the buildings.