

Renovation/construction project would transform portion of Lenox downtown village

Posted Saturday, November 30, 2019 3:24 pm

LENOX — A proposal for a major development project in the downtown village includes renovation of one of the oldest homes in town and construction of three new buildings, two for high-end apartments and one for mixed-use commercial and residential.



This rendering depicts a mixed-use residential and commercial development proposed for downtown Lenox, at 114 Main St. If approved, a renovation and construction proposal for the building, which is one of the oldest homes in town, would be the most significant downtown redevelopment in many decades.

ILLUSTRATION CONTRIBUTED BY WINSTANLEY ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS

The proposal by Nathan and M. Kathryn Winstanley for their property at 114 Main St. would transform the northern end of the historic village and, if approved, would be the most significant downtown redevelopment in many decades.

The Windrose Place project would add 27 residential units to the parcel that had housed the office of Winstanley Partners, the nationally known advertising, design and public relations firm, for 25 years, until it closed two years ago.

The 1790 Northrup House, known for many years as Meadow Place, is scheduled for renovation to accommodate seven of the 27 residential units. Beginning in 1928, Meadow Place was home to the Berkshire County Home for Aged Women, which relocated to Pittsfield in the 1980s.

The proposed development, likely to be condominiums rather than rentals, is aimed at retirees and second-home owners and is not expected to have a major impact on the town's schools, according to the application on file at Town Hall. If approved by town boards, it would take up to two years to build, providing construction jobs and an influx of workers into the downtown.

The project is expected to cost \$17 million to \$20 million, Nathan Winstanley told The Eagle. If it gains approval, he would turn it over to a developer who would implement the Winstanley design.

Renovation/construction project would transform portion of Lenox downtown village

Posted Saturday, November 30, 2019 3:24 pm

One new building would contain 10 residences, while the second would have eight. According to the application filed with the Historic District Commission, an internal private courtyard would allow for 56 resident parking spaces — 21 in a garage — and for social gatherings. Additional parking is behind the structures, bordering a wetlands garden on the south side, and there is a deal to share available parking at the adjacent St. Anne's Church, if needed.

The 25 residential units in the existing Northrup House and the two new buildings would total slightly less than 30,000 square feet, while the adjacent commercial mixed-use building, including two residences, would add 2,880 square feet to the project.

The courtyard design includes "landscape treatments of foundation plantings and street trees." The entire project's landscaping is based on local vegetation to highlight the gardens, sidewalks, parking areas and architecture.

The mixed-use commercial building, with nine parking spaces, would be constructed at Main and Franklin streets. The first floor would house businesses, with two residential units on the second floor.

The 9,400-square-foot house on 3.26 acres, built in 1790 for local businessman Colonel Elijah Northrup, includes frontage on Main and Franklin streets. The site, assessed by the town at just over \$1 million, had been listed for sale at \$2.7 million for the past two years.

According to the application, the design "reflects the surrounding Greek revival architectural detailing and scale, and the project's site design and massing have been established to create and preserve meaningful open spaces."

Windrose Place is intended to preserve land and open spaces, garden areas, sidewalks, landscaping, screening and paved driveways.

The project's design aims "to avoid and then minimize intrusion near and on environmentally sensitive areas," the application states, while encouraging pedestrian flow onto Main Street and surrounding areas.

The town's Conservation Commission already has determined that there are no state Wetlands Protection Act issues of concern at the site.

As for the impact on the town, the Winstanley application states that "the project brings new residents into the Village center adjacent to the Town's growing commercial district."

The Historic District Commission will hold a public meeting at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday in Town Hall for the first review of the proposal, and the Zoning Board of Appeals will examine the application at a session expected later in December.

Part of the site is in the commercial zone and the rest is in a residential zone. The application states that all new construction is within the commercial zone, while the upper-story residences in the proposed mixed-use building are permitted by right in a commercial zone.

Although all the multifamily dwelling units are allowed by right in the commercial zone, the applicants are seeking a special permit from the zoning board because a buffer zone falls 5 feet short of the required 200 feet of spacing between the project and an adjacent property, and because the proposed parking spaces are eight fewer than required.

The application lists these "beneficial effects to the town and the neighborhood" that outweigh any adverse effects:

- Community needs are served by enhancing and promoting a walkable village, with easy access for the project's residents to shops, businesses, restaurants and houses of worship without the need of a car. The proposed commercial building would attract a new business, retail store or office while increasing the assessed value of the property and of the town's tax base.

Renovation/construction project would transform portion of Lenox downtown village

Posted Saturday, November 30, 2019 3:24 pm

- Traffic would flow safely into and out of the site through current access on Main Street and two new curb cuts to accommodate one-way and two-way driveways. Regular users of area intersections should not notice any impact on traffic flow, the proposal states, although delays are expected to increase slightly at the intersections.
- The project would benefit local business owners and the town's economy through a seamless connection between the proposed development and the existing neighborhood, yielding a "substantial benefit to the immediate area and the town as a whole."
- The development minimizes environmental impact by clustering the buildings and using previously developed areas.
- The town would benefit economically because of an increased tax base fueled by the increase in property taxes generated by the project.

Winstanley Architects and Planners of Alexandria, Va., led by Michael Winstanley, brother of Nathan Winstanley, designed the project. SK Design Group of Pittsfield is the civil engineer, and the applicants are represented by William and Michael Martin of the Martin & Oliveira law firm in Pittsfield.

"The proposed Windrose Place development strikes a balance in recognizing the historic legacy of Lenox and the need for thoughtful development that preserves the feeling and character of the Village but at the same time has a positive economic and fiscal impact on the Village and the Town as a whole," the application states.