


**TOWN OF MANCHESTER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

TO: Maria Cruz, Town Clerk

FROM: Megan Pilla, Principal Development Planner 

DATE: February 20, 2024

RE: Proposed Zoning Regulation Amendment (REG-0001-2024)
Conversion of Former School Buildings to Multi-family Residential

The Manchester Planning and Zoning Commission proposes to amend the Town zoning regulations in Art. II, Sec. I (General Requirements for Residential Zones) to allow the conversion of former school buildings to multi-family residential.

Enclosed, please find a copy of the proposed text changes and 2 copies of the legal notice for the March 4, 2024 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting at which this application will be discussed.

Please date stamp this memo, as well as one copy of the enclosed legal notice, and return them to the Planning Department for our records.

mp/kw

Encls.

Proposed new section to be added to Art. II, Sec. I (General Requirements for Residential Zones)

1.00.03 Multi-family school conversion special exception

- (a) Purpose: To allow for the conversion of existing school buildings to multi-family use and related development; the nature of multi-family school conversion is such that design and development may vary for different sites; multi-family school conversion is subject to the requirements set forth in this section.
- (b) Criteria for special exception: Prior to approval of a special exception, the applicant must demonstrate that the special exception, proposed use and proposed plan of development shall comply with the Special Exception criteria set forth in Article IV, Section 20 of these regulations.
- (c) Accessory uses will be permitted including but not limited to: Radio and television antennae; signs; maintenance and elevator buildings; vehicle parking areas and parking structures for residents, visitors and employees of the uses conducted and for which the parking use is appurtenant.
- (d) Site development criteria: Since prior building development will have determined the general layout of the site, the conversion and any future land development shall be consistent and in harmony with the established physical relationship of existing buildings to land area, taking into consideration the criteria set forth in the following provisions:
 - 1. Required lot/site area: Every lot to be utilized for this special exception conversion shall have a minimum lot area no less than two (2) acres.
 - 2. Height: New buildings or additions/renovations to existing buildings shall not exceed three (3) habitable stories or forty (40) feet.
 - 3. Minimum yards: New buildings or additions/renovations to existing buildings shall comply with the minimum yard requirements for the zone in which the property is located.
 - 4. Minimum floor areas: The minimum living area for units in a multi-family dwelling shall be as follows:

Efficiency/studio units	300 square feet
One-bedroom units	500 square feet
Two-bedroom units	700 square feet.

And for each bedroom in excess of 2, add an additional 150 square feet.
 - 5. Site drainage: The site shall be adequately drained and include a storm

water drainage system that prioritizes on-site infiltration and/or detention, and all new drainage facilities shall be designed in accordance with the Town of Manchester Public Improvement Standards. Roof drainage shall not discharge directly onto or across sidewalks, driveways, roadways or parking areas. Low Impact Development techniques shall be considered.

6. Utilities: Public sanitary sewer and public water shall be required. Completion of the multi-family school conversion may require the installation of additional domestic water services, fire water services, water meters and/or sanitary sewer laterals to serve individual units or buildings in accordance with Town requirements. All new water and sewer facilities shall be in accordance with the criteria and requirements set forth in the Manchester Water and Sewer Department Rules and Regulations.
7. Roadways and driveways:
 - a. All private roadways, driveways and parking areas shall be designed to facilitate traffic circulation and emergency vehicle movement;
 - b. Notwithstanding any provision elsewhere in these regulations, private roadways and driveways designed for vehicular traffic shall have the following minimum requirements:
 - Two-way traffic—24 foot width;
 - One-way traffic with 45 degree parking on one or both sides — 16 foot width;
 - One-way traffic with 60 degree parking on one or both sides — 18 foot width;
 - One-way traffic with 90 degree parking on one or both sides — 24 foot width;
 - Inside turning radius — 30 feet.
 - c. Fire lanes shall be provided as required by the Fire Marshal's Office. The applicant shall indicate on the plan the location of such lanes and shall provide all fire lane signs and markings as required. Fire apparatus turning demonstration(s) specific to one or more responding vehicles shall be submitted upon request by the Fire Marshal's Office or the Town.
8. Vehicle parking:
 - a. There shall be provided on the building site, one vehicle parking space for each studio or one-bedroom residential unit and two vehicle parking spaces for each residential unit with two or more bedrooms. Notwithstanding the foregoing, for residential units within a half (½) mile radius of existing mass transit and where the

unit mix consists of 50% or more one- bedroom or efficiency units, the minimum parking ratio shall be one (1) space per dwelling unit.¹

- b. Visitor parking spaces shall be provided on site at the rate of 1 visitor space per 4 dwelling units. The applicant may request to decrease the visitor parking requirement if the applicant can show that such requirement would not be needed for the proposed development.
 - c. The vehicle parking area may be within the building, underground, elevated or at grade level.
9. Fire protection: Fire hydrants shall be installed so that no portion of a building is greater than 250 feet from a hydrant or otherwise in accordance with recommendations by the Fire Marshal's Office and the Town.
10. Site preservation and landscaping:
- a. The development of a site shall be designed and developed in such a manner as to preserve its natural state insofar as is practicable by:
 1. Minimizing soil and tree removal.
 2. Designing grade changes which will blend harmoniously with the natural and undisturbed landscape.
 3. Not creating steep slopes by regrading.
 4. Treating disturbed surfaces to encourage plant growth and soil stabilization by providing top soil and the planting of appropriate trees, shrubs and grass.
 5. Preserving natural features such as steep slopes, rock outcrops, wetlands, vistas, etc.
 6. Implementing measures to minimize soil erosion and to prevent the pollution of watercourses.
 - b. A multi-family dwelling site shall be landscaped, graded and developed to preserve and establish natural vegetation for recreation, screening, shade, aesthetics, and soil stabilization.
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- c. All parking lots, loading areas, driveways, refuse collections areas, mechanical equipment such as generators and air conditioning condensers, and maintenance buildings shall be screened from adjoining residential properties with a landscaped border not less than 8 feet wide. The landscaped border shall provide a year-round effect through which such areas are obscured from view from abutting residential property. Appropriate evergreen species shall be planted at least four feet in height at a separation distance which provides for growth of the planting and visual screening.

If a landscaped berm, masonry wall or combination thereof at least four feet high is installed to provide the visual screen then the requirement for planting evergreen species may be waived by the Commission. Masonry walls shall have a finished surface of brick, fieldstone, architecturally textured concrete, split face block or similar material. Exposed concrete block or standard finish poured or precast concrete shall not be acceptable finishes.

Fencing shall be required when landscaping, walls and/or grading cannot provide the required screening due to topography, preservation of specimen trees or other important natural features, avoidance of wetlands or similar conditions. Fences when constructed shall be, at minimum, four feet high when measured from the top of the adjacent grade and shall be made of wood. Fences shall be installed in accordance with the requirements of Article II, Section 1.03.04. The Commission may, for good cause shown, approve the use of materials other than wood after an application for a different material is submitted.

Along all parking areas and drives the landscaped border shall include a light proof fence or masonry wall to prevent automobile headlights from causing a nuisance to adjoining residents. The landscaped border for parking area and drive screening shall not be counted towards the landscape area in Article IV, Section 9.02.05.

All trees, shrubs, walls and fences shall be maintained at a height of not more than three feet within the sight distance triangle of all street and driveway intersections. The sight distance triangle shall be as defined in the Town of Manchester Public Improvement Standards.

The Commission may waive all or any requirements in this section or modify such requirements if it finds that existing foliage or natural conditions are sufficient to constitute a screen for the protection of residential premises, or that such screening is not feasible and not necessary due to site configuration or location.

11. Garbage storage: Facilities for the storage of refuse and garbage shall be located in such a manner as to make the facilities inconspicuous to the general public view with suitable materials to harmonize with the building. Such materials may include, but not be limited to, fencing and plantings.
12. Lighting: All lighting intended to illuminate the building(s), parking areas or yards shall be arranged so that the lights will not shine into the eyes of any person external to the premises or cause a nuisance from excessive glare.
13. Recreation areas: An area equal to not less than 30% of the gross floor area on the site shall be developed for usable recreation area(s) for either active or passive recreation purposes.
 - a. Not less than 50% of the minimum required recreation areas shall consist of outdoor areas or facilities.
 - b. Outdoor areas shall be improved with grass or pavers or may be left in a natural state, or may be improved for active recreational purposes, such as walking paths, playscapes, courts and swimming pools, or similar areas used for picnic tables, lawn furniture, fire pits or barbeque stands.
 - c. Public parks and accessible open space directly adjacent to the development site shall be counted toward the recreation area for the site. Safe pedestrian access between the development site and the public space must be provided.
14. Building exterior: Designs for exterior building rehabilitation shall recommend appropriate material, colors, etc. intended to maintain or restore the integrity of the original architectural character of a given structure.
15. Residential Signs
 - a. There shall be no more than one residential sign identifying the structure per lot except, if the building fronts on two streets, two signs will be permitted (one sign per street).
 - b. Wall-mounted residential signs at major entrances designed to identify a multi-family residential use shall be permitted. The area of such wall-mounted signs shall not exceed 16 square feet. No wall-mounted sign shall project above the cornice line of the building on which it is located.

- c. A freestanding residential sign shall be permitted if it is located at least five feet from any property line. No freestanding residential sign shall exceed a height of four feet above grade and shall have a maximum size of 20 square feet.
 - d. A projecting residential sign shall have an area not exceeding 12 square feet.
16. Application procedure: The applicant shall file an application for a multi-family school conversion special exception, including Preliminary and Detailed Plans of Development, for all of the property located within the proposed multi-family conversion special exception site. The Preliminary and Detailed Plans of Development may be separate or combined in accordance with the provisions of Article I, Section 4.

**TOWN OF MANCHESTER
LEGAL NOTICE**

The Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on March 4, 2024 at 7:00 P.M., both virtually and in person in the Lincoln Center Hearing Room, 494 Main Street, Manchester, Connecticut, to hear and consider the following petitions:

TOWN OF MANCHESTER PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION – Zoning Regulation Amendment (REG-0001-2024) – Proposed regulation amendment at Art. II, Sec. I (General Requirements for Residential Zones) to allow the conversion of former school buildings to multi-family residential.

HILLIARD MILLS LLC – Inland Wetland Permit (IWP-0054-2023) – Changes to previously approved PZC plans at 640 & 642 Hilliard Street and 370 Adams Street, Industrial and Rural Residential zones, for renovation of buildings 5 & 6 and various site improvements.

At this hearing interested persons may be heard, either in person or virtually via Zoom, and written communications received. This meeting will be shown live on Cox Channel 16 and streamed live at <http://www.channel16.org/CablecastPublicSite/watch/1?channel=1>. Individuals who wish to speak at or attend the virtual meeting must complete a Request to Attend Virtually form, available at <https://manct.us/meeting>, by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. These individuals will need to join the Zoom meeting and will be allowed to speak when directed by the Chairman. Zoom meeting information will be sent to individuals who complete a Request to Attend Virtually form. Only individuals who complete a Request to Attend Virtually form will be allowed to join the Zoom meeting. A physical location and electronic equipment will be provided for the public to use if a written request is received at least 24 hours in advance, via email to pzccomments@manchesterct.gov, or by mail to the Planning Department, 494 Main Street, P.O. Box 191, Manchester, CT 06045-0191.

Individuals may also submit comments in writing to the Planning and Economic Development Department via email to pzccomments@manchesterct.gov, or by mail to the Planning Department, 494 Main Street, P.O. Box 191, Manchester, CT 06045-0191. All written comments received by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting will be presented and recorded as part of the hearing.

A copy of the proposed zoning regulation amendment may be reviewed online at <https://www.manchesterct.gov/Government/Departments/Planning-and-Economic-Development>; by contacting the Town Clerk's office at townclerkdept@manchesterct.gov or (860) 647-3037 to request a PDF by email; or in the Planning and Economic Development Department, 494 Main Street, during regular business hours, 8:30 – 4:30, Monday through Friday. Information about this application will be available online at <https://Manchesterct.gov/pzc> by the Friday before the hearing.

Planning and Zoning Commission
Eric Prause, Chair

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Planning and Zoning Commission
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