

Preliminary Review - 6 Mulberry Street Zoning Proposal

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We have been asked by the Village Board to review the potential zoning amendment proposed for the 6 Mulberry Street property in the Village of Rhinebeck, New York. It is the intent of our review to provide objective data to the Board to inform their review and consideration of the proposed zoning amendment.

We have reviewed existing zoning statutes and have engaged in discussions with consultants supporting the Village in updating the Comprehensive Plan, a currently on-going process. We also reviewed the "Dutchess County Housing Needs Assessment," published in March, 2022.

Review of the Housing Needs Assessment and the US Census American Community Survey for 2021 revealed a few pertinent data points. Like many places, Dutchess County and the Village of Rhinebeck continue to age. Households over 65 either married or single living alone are projected to grow significantly despite a projected slower growth rate in the overall number of households. Average household size is projected to shrink accordingly. Approximately 93% of all owner-occupied residential units in the Village are 3 to 4 bedroom single-family homes, with multi-family homes comprising 5.3% of the total.

Our reviews and discussions indicated a potential imbalance between future housing demand and the current supply of housing. As a result, there is a strong likelihood that recommendations of the Master Planning process will include the goals of increasing housing supply, diversity and affordability, community walkability, as well as fostering the preservation of historic character in the community.

The subject property ("the property") consists of a single lot totaling 1.44 acres. The property is located in the R Zoning District. Single-family structures are allowed in the district. Two-family structures and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are allowed by Special Permit. New multi-family housing is not allowed except where it has existed prior to the adoption of the Zoning. The project proponent has indicated that up to seven lots could potentially be developed as of right on the property. In addition, there is potential for up to seven ADUs to be permitted on the property, one for each permitted single-family lot.

The parcel is located within the Rhinebeck Village Historic District and there is a former school building on the property. While it was not listed in the original National Register nomination of the Historic District, the property was listed as a Contributing Structure in updated nomination materials that were accepted by the NY State Historic Preservation Office in September 2020. The existing building consists of an original brick structure with Art Deco period detailing, and two later concrete block additions. Alteration or demolition of Contributing Structures requires review and approval by the Planning Board in a Site Plan Review Process.

The existing neighborhood is characterized by single family residential uses interspersed with a few institutional uses such as schools and churches. The neighborhood appears to have been built out in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. This school building was operated by

the adjacent Church and has been an important feature of the neighborhood since its construction in 1930. The property is located within easy walking distance of the Village Center.

The project proponent proposes to subdivide the property into five lots, four with proposed single-family homes and one with the existing building. Two modern additions to the historic building are proposed to be demolished, and the remaining historically intact building is proposed for adaptive re-use for nine multi-family two-bedroom units. More than half of the proposed multi-family units are proposed to be ADA accessibility compliant. The applicant has submitted a "Development Feasibility Report" that indicates that the site will support on-site septic disposal for the proposed residential use. The thirteen total units proposed are less than the theoretical seven single-family units with seven ADUs, or the 14 two family units that could potentially be built on the property.

The proposed plat and site plan envisions four single family homes on individual lots along with nine multi-family apartments in the architecturally significant portion of the existing building. Parking for the multi-family units is to be located behind the building, away from the street and buffered from adjacent properties. There appears to be adequate provision for on-site septic disposal based on the Applicant's assessment; the Applicant will be required to demonstrate adequacy to the County Health Department. Traffic impacts from the proposed development are expected to be consistent with the number of trips expected from a development of up to 12-14 two-family units as allowed as of right.

Given the historic importance of the existing school building and its place in the fabric of the neighborhood, adaptive re-use serves several goals. The use for multi-family housing provides a much-needed type of housing that is currently in very limited supply in the Village of Rhinebeck. In addition, adaptive re-use of the building advances ideals of sustainability in re-purposing an existing resource.

In summary, the current proposal appears to be consistent with the Standards and Conditions in the Village Code (120-48) related to Special Permits. A zoning amendment will likely be needed to allow the adaptive re-use of the historic structure and if the zoning were amended to permit the use, we assume the approval would be by Special Permit similar to other uses permitted by Special Permit in the R zone. Any zoning amendment should be reviewed by the Village's legal counsel and will need to undergo the proper review process including completion of the environmental review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

The proposed development is also consistent with several goals that are likely to be enumerated in the Master Planning process currently under way:

- Preservation of historic resources
- Preservation of neighborhood character
- Providing diversity of housing
- Providing housing that is conveniently located within walking distance of the commercial center of the Village of Rhinebeck
- Advancing sustainable development goals via adaptive reuse of existing buildings