

PLYMPTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

5 Palmer Road, Plympton, MA 02367

781-585-3220

17 December 2004

Plympton Planning Board
Jack O'Leary, Chair
5 Palmer Road
Plympton, MA 02367

RE: Whitestone Properties Plympton Plaza

Dear Jack,

The Plympton Historical Commission (Commission) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed Plympton Plaza development by Whitestone Properties in Plympton Center, particularly since the proposed site of development abuts the historical Plympton Center area and National Register eligible Plympton Center district. The Commission further appreciates the work being done by Whitestone Properties to improve the area proposed for redevelopment.

We have reviewed the site plan dated 9/28/04 along with the elevation drawings that reflect an L-shaped building, which appears significantly different than the site plan. We also had the opportunity to review a newer 'site' plan dated in early December that reflected a substantially similar building, albeit larger square footage and a narrower building at the north end. Based on a discussion with Joe Webby on December 13th, we understand that the 'site' plan has changed again and that the most recent we have reviewed is not current. Also, I spoke with John English later that week and he agreed to provide a revised front elevation to the Planning Board that accurately reflects the elevation based on the most recent site plan. As such, it is difficult for the Commission to provide specific comments, as we have not reviewed an elevation drawing for the proposed structure nor a current site plan. That said, below are initial comments based on the information currently reviewed.

The Commission is concerned with the following attributes of the site plan and requests that the Planning Board consider requiring modifications to the site plan in these areas if an approval is to be issued:

- **Scale of Building:** Given the proposed size of the building and its close proximity to Main Street, the Commission is concerned that the building will seem even larger. Also since the façade will have very little relief, it could seem even larger than represented on the currently available plans. The Commission understands that the building will have three gable end structures to help break up the roofline and façade, but questions whether that will be enough to break-up the feeling of a very large building. We look forward to reviewing the revised elevation drawing and hope that the design will ultimately address this concern.

- Use of Materials: Given its proximity to the historically significant area, we strongly urge that the development will utilize appropriate materials such as clapboard and/or wood shingles to blend more seamlessly with the existing structures in the area. We ask that appropriate materials be used on all façades visible from Main Street and Parsonage Road.
- Signage: The Commission urges the use of wooden signage lit with appropriate fixtures rather than fluorescent backed plastic signage. Wooden signage, such as that used at the Dunkin Donuts in Carver on Rte 58 provides excellent visibility while also helping to preserve the visual landscape.
- Use of Lighting: The Commission urges the use of fixtures that do not detract from the architectural aesthetic of the historical Plympton Center. Use of appropriate fixtures could greatly enhance the overall aesthetic of the proposed development and of the surrounding area as well.
- Landscaping: The Commission urges the use of landscaping to help the proposed development blend more seamlessly into the surrounding area. The inclusion of trees and shrubs could go a long way to helping to reduce the perceived scale of the development and would provide a significant improvement over the current site.

The Commission looks forward reviewing additional information received as part of this site plan review and again appreciates the opportunity to offer comments. Please contact me directly with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jon K. Wilhelmsen, Chair
Plympton Historical Commission