

Adapted from Public Comment at
October 14, 2020 Planning Board Meeting

CDA's Magical Projections

November 12, 2020

Joshua Meyrowitz, 7 Chesley Drive, Durham, NH

Prof.Joshua.Meyrowitz@gmail.com [vk]

First: Acknowledging Some (partial) Progress!



After 7 months of multiple citizen comments, there are now TWO Public Hearing signs along Mill Rd.

It's not clear if these new signs retroactively legitimate previously improperly noticed Public Hearings.

These signs cite a ten-month stale hearing date: Jan 22, 2020 (i.e., not at all informative to the public).

And we can see the stump – aka “existing tree to remain” per CDA.

But at least SOME response to public input. So that's progress!

In addition to essential SITE WALK at/adjacent to Plaza, we hope Board members will observe & record student WEEKEND night life on Main St & Madbury Commons, such as from the spots below, ***BEFORE the early end of Fall Semester (i.e., before Thanksgiving)***



Pauly's Pocket Deck on Main St



Hop 'n' Grind table at Madbury Commons

Steady flow of UNH students. The “liveliest” time: Saturday night, 11:30p to 1:30a

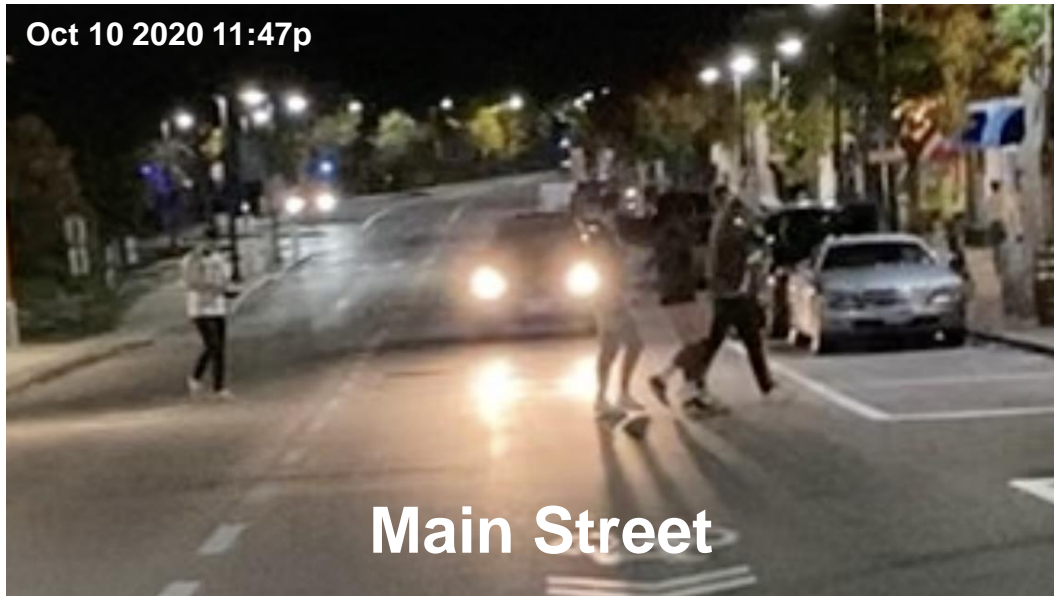


Oct 11 2020 1:02a



Oct 11 2020 12:23a

Such “action” would be in store for families abutting Mill Plaza if 258 students are allowed to move in.



Oct 10 2020 11:47p

Main Street



Oct 10 2020 11:57p

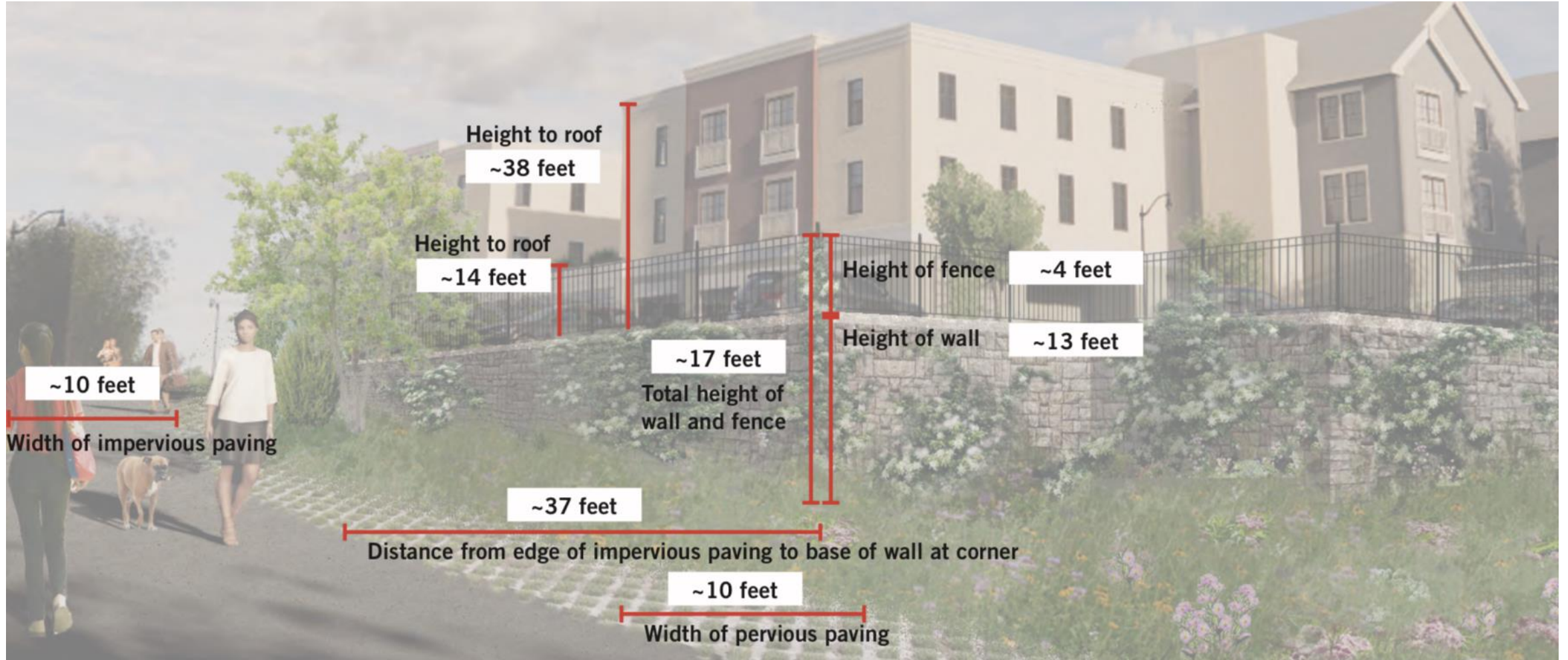
Madbury Commons

Mill Plaza late on weekend nights



Please also observe & compare the weekend night sights & sounds of Main St & Madbury Commons to CURRENT Mill Plaza site at night – as it is has been experienced by Faculty Neighborhood abutters for 50+ yrs.

On [Aug 26, 2020](#), CDA finally revealed proposed dimensions:
A 13-foot tall retaining wall (topped by 4-foot fence)



That must be a VERY LARGE woman walking by!

“The wall is further away from the path than people think.”

(CDA’s Emily Innes, [Aug 8](#), 11:23a)

But *explaining* an illusion doesn’t make it less of an ILLUSION!



We all know general height of a person; wall is thus made to look much smaller than it would be.

At end of Aug 8, 2020 “Community Meeting” Zoom session, Emily Innes promised to break the illusion by showing a person standing up against the 13’ retaining wall.

But that CDA promise to break the wall-shortening illusion has not yet been fulfilled.

Luckily, in the absence of follow-through on that “person-against-the wall image,” I found a 13-foot tall extension ladder to expose the size distortions in CDA images.



The height of the proposed Bldg C retaining wall

NOT including the 4-foot fence atop the wall

illustrated with 13-foot extension ladder

The retaining wall alone
(before the 4' fence) is
this much taller than
a 5'10" woman →→

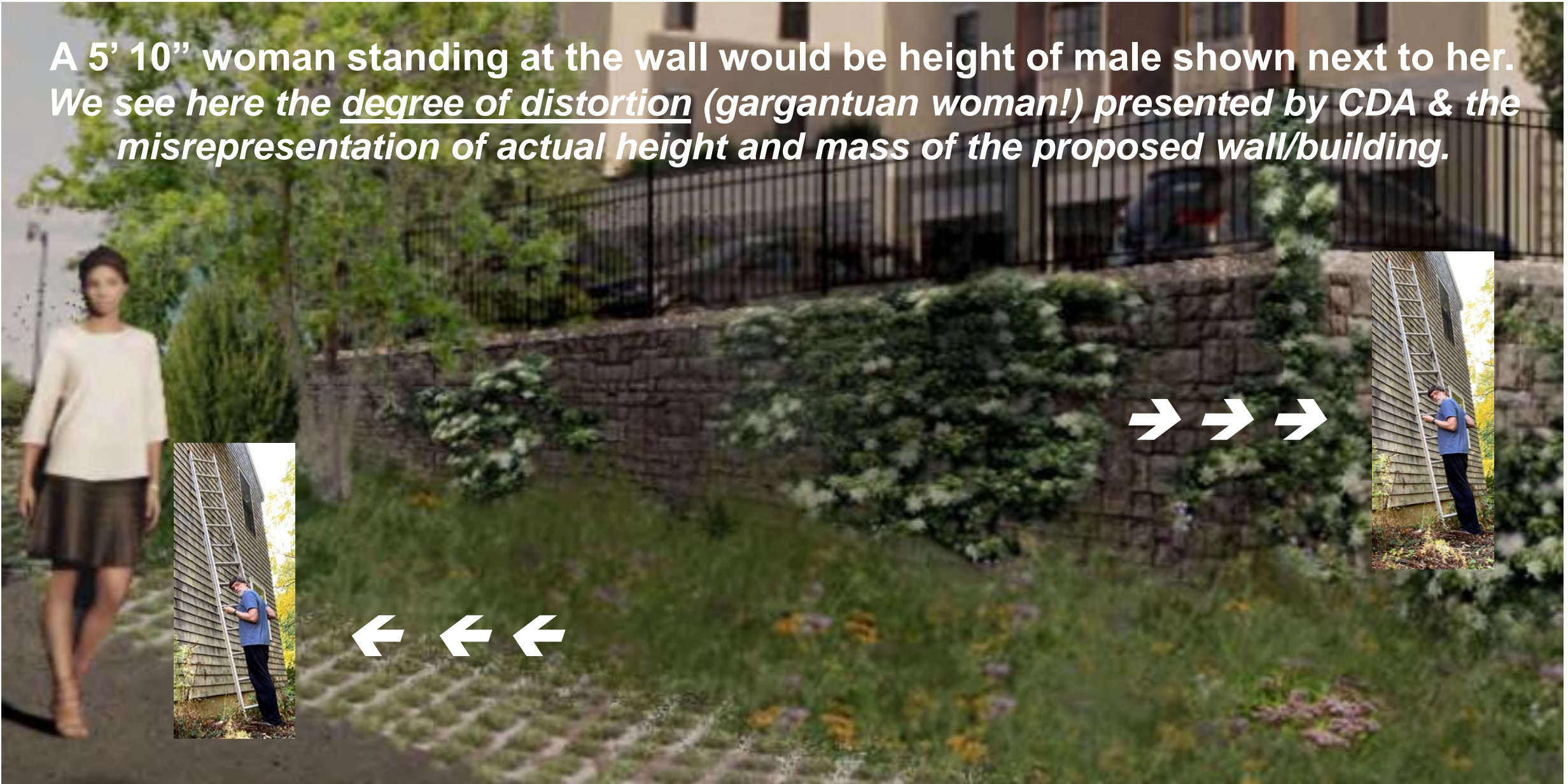


**This image may explain why CDA has not yet shown actual relative heights of person/wall:
*a 5'10" person standing against the towering wall is almost invisible***



***In this ACCURATE scale, the proposed wall looks intimidatingly – and unpleasantly – massive!
And a so-called “3-story building” is revealed to be as imposing as a 4-story or taller structure.***

A 5' 10" woman standing at the wall would be height of male shown next to her. We see here the degree of distortion (gargantuan woman!) presented by CDA & the misrepresentation of actual height and mass of the proposed wall/building.



The Planning Board should demand VISUAL ILLUSTRATIONS from CDA, not OPTICAL ILLUSIONS!

These women appear to be different heights (even though they are same person), because we assume that rooms are rectangular (while this room is trapezoidal).



***Again, explaining an illusion does not make it less of an ILLUSION!
CDA should be required to submit accurate ILLUSTRATIONS, not optical ILLUSIONS.***

How far apart are the buildings?

CDA “Wide-Angle” Projection

(creates sense that Building B is *very distant* from A)



CDA “Telephoto” Projection

(creates the sense that Building B is *very close* to A)



As illustrated on next slide, this difference is NOT related to the initial viewing position on Building A.

Views from Hannaford



Views from Rite Aid



Telephoto lenses (left in each pair) compress distances. Wide-angle lenses (right in each pair) spread out distances.

CDA Traffic Impact Study “Disappears” increased tenant traffic:

Traffic impact from adding 258 student residents to the Mill Plaza site should “not be...taken into consideration for this application because the residents won’t be parking on site. We’re really talking about [added traffic impact only from] 25,000 sf of commercial.” – CDA’s Sean McCauley, [Oct 14 2020](#), 9:53p

CDA not only employs illusions to shrink walls and change building distances, it also employs flawed traffic-increase projections to magically “disappear” 258 proposed *student tenants, their friends’ & family pick-ups/drop offs, day/overnight visitors, Uber/Lyft cars, deliveries, etc.* **An accurate traffic study must include all of these.**

A legitimate Plaza site-plan traffic impact study must also include the dramatically increased Durham core traffic from the *coordinated application* for a large [Church Hill parking lot](#), adjoining the Plaza. A hoped-for “long-term lease arrangement with our neighbor” is touted by Sean McCauley, and the Church Hill application explicitly notes that: “[A portion of the new parking lot is intended to serve another off-campus student housing facility proposed by others at 5 Mill Road](#),” p. 1. **The Planning Board needs to see through the smoke & mirror obfuscations surrounding these two inter-connected applications and consider the traffic impacts of both projects in combination.**

In CDA's Traffic Impact Study, 258 students & their visitors miraculously teleport into/out of off-site street *crosswalks* – without MOVING *THROUGH PLAZA* from/to their beds.



- Foot traffic
- Bike traffic
- Skateboard traffic
- Scooter traffic
- Motorbike traffic
- Motorcycle traffic



Main Street Housing

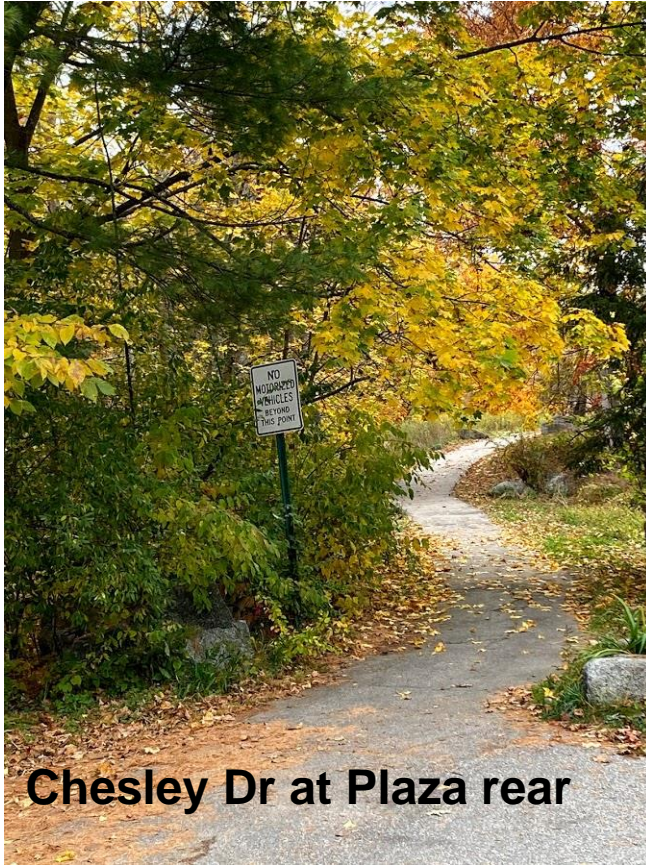


Madbury Commons Oct 11 2020 12:10a

The Planning Board must study all increases in ON-SITE (& adjoining neighborhood) traffic.

CDA Traffic Study Omits Pedestrian & Vehicle Impact on Surrounding Neighborhoods

Student tenants will no doubt quickly figure out that the shortest car access to their apartments (for dropping off people and goods and pickup of people) will be through:



These adjacent neighborhood impacts need to be addressed in a Traffic analysis.

Plaza Site Plan would increase traffic on the “Residential Streets Bypass” to Mill Plaza

There are two routes from “Gasoline Alley” to Mill Plaza

Main Street to Plaza

Main St up Church Hill
R at Post Office onto Madbury Rd
L at Pettee Brook Lane
L onto Main St
R onto Mill Rd & L into Plaza

“Residential Bypass” to Plaza

L onto Newmarket Rd
R onto Mill Pond Rd
R onto Faculty Rd
R onto Mill Rd
R into Plaza

Even before any added traffic from the proposed Mill Plaza redevelopment, many drivers know that it’s often faster to get to UNH and Mill Plaza by avoiding the frequent backup of traffic on Main St at Church Hill (with STOP sign at Post Office & the backup of cars on the loop through Pettee Brook Lane back into Main St).

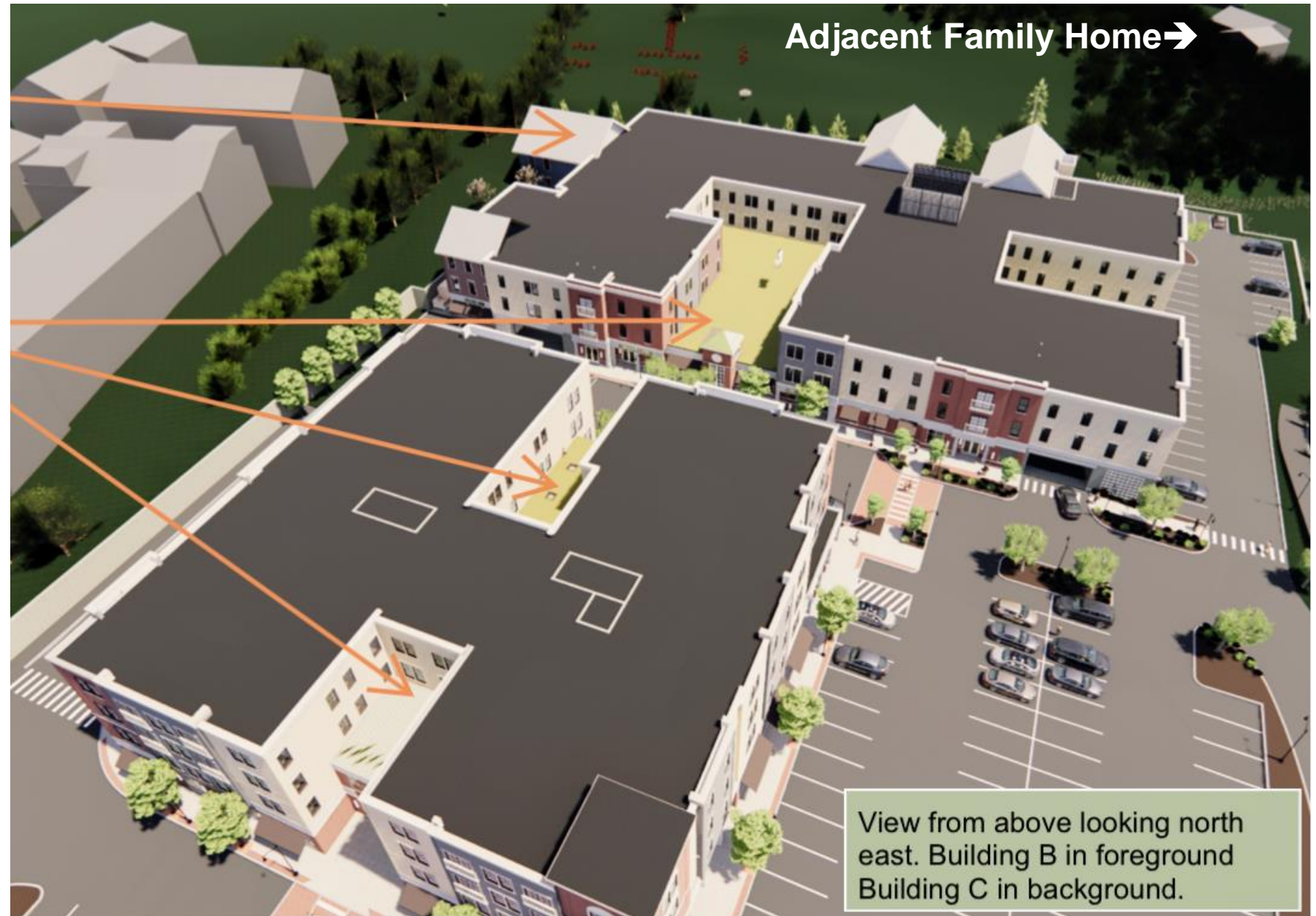
The current Mill Plaza site plan (and certainly a new Church Hill so-called “off-site” parking lot for 142 Plaza tenants) will lead to dramatic increase in traffic on the above “Residential Streets Bypass.”

Why is this SOUTH-EAST looking CDA image mislabeled “looking north east”?*

Really “In-Scale” with Neighborhood, as Conditional-Use Zoning Requires?

Dozens of citizen comments have critiqued massive, dense, claustrophobic scale of the buildings.

****perhaps because the legal Settlement indicates housing to be concentrated on North of site?***



Adjacent Family Home →

View from above looking north east. Building B in foreground Building C in background.

PB Member: Reduce Buildings & Parking to Increase Greenspace

Planning Board Member Richard Kelley: “The applicant has asked for feedback in regards to landscaping.... We heard from the public, and I feel much the same way.... See if we can go back to the drawing board and do something remarkable here.... And I do realize what I’m asking: **That would be a reduction of building footprint, parking, in order to get greenspace. But I’m going to throw that out there and ask the applicant to look at that and report back *next week*, whether it can be done or not.**” – PB June 10 2020, 10:54p – transcribed from [video](#); [emphases added; see also [minutes](#), p. 18]

On September 23, 2020 the Planning Board voted 6-1 to form an Architectural Design Review Subcommittee. **The title was later changed – out of public view & with no public Board vote – to a “Minor” review subcommittee.***

*See comments on “not limited to color” but full “architectural review” in meeting [video](#) at about 9:12pm and pp. 13-14 in draft [minutes](#). Somehow, apparently out of public view, the subcommittee was transformed into a “[Minor Architectural Subcommittee](#)” limited to “focusing on color and minor architectural feature” of CDA’s application. Such an “offline” change, if true, would seem to violate public meeting requirements. As the PB Chair accurately noted at 11:25:46, at the [Oct 14 meeting](#) in relation to another issue, the Board “can’t do much offline; we have to all the work during the meeting. That’s one of the ‘transparency’ rules.” See also NH [RSA 91-A](#), commonly referred to as the “Right To Know” law. **In any case, the change has prevented a serious review of the massively oversized scale of what is proposed.**

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