



TOWN OF DURHAM
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Town Planner's Project Review
Wednesday, June 27, 2018

- X. **The Lodges – Modification for Landscaping.** 259 Mast Road. Proposal to change approved landscaping plan for large retaining wall on westerly side of site to plant Virginia Creeper ivy to cover exposed sections of wall. HSRE Lodges at West Edge LLC, property owner. Lenny Foss, Elf's Landscaping, landscaper. Map 13, Lot 6-1. ORLI District.
- I recommend approval of the modification, with any appropriate changes, as stated below.

Please note the following:

Modification. I think this change is sufficiently minor that it should be treated as a modification by the Planning Board (rather than an amendment which requires notices and a public hearing), such that the board could take final action in one meeting. However, I would recommend that the board allow comments at the meeting by any interested party, whether under the Public Comments time at the beginning or when the board is reviewing this item.

Original landscaping plan. After the Lodges development was built concerns were expressed about the view toward the project from the west along Mast Road of both the large retaining wall and the tall buildings. The Lodges agreed to enhance the landscaping to better buffer the wall and the buildings. The Lodges submitted a plan for significant enhancement of the landscaping. The plan is dated Revised 12/22/14 and is included in the packets. That plan was approved by the Planning Board on June 24, 2015.

Retaining wall. On the far left side of the 12/22/14 landscaping plan, where the retaining wall is shown, there are 36 Baltic English Ivy on top of the retaining wall, five feet on center. The ivy were planted but they died. The plan shows 18 Bar Harbor Junipers also that were planted on top of the wall, 15 feet on center between every 2 Baltic Ivy plants. The junipers are still in place but they are not thriving and are not providing any buffering of the wall.

Replacement planting. I met on site twice with Michael Bennett, Regional Manager for Peak Campus, and Lennie Foss, proprietor of Elf's Landscaping. Mr. Foss examined the site and believes that the ivy died and the juniper failed to thrive due to the hot exposed conditions at the *top of the wall* and the poor drainage. He recommends installing 6 Virginia Creeper plants at the *bottom of the wall*, evenly spaced. Virginia Creeper is deciduous but Mr. Foss said there is no evergreen ivy/climbing plant that will thrive in this situation. The plant must be drought tolerant because of the limited planting area and have high heat tolerance.

He said the Virginia Creeper should be staked so that it climbs up the wall rather than away from the wall. Once it starts growing it will continue in that direction. He would add a soil hormone mix. He said Virginia Creeper is a rapid and aggressive grower, native, and very hardy and it will tolerate windy conditions. The ivy will have green leaves from April to November. In the winter months the leafless vines will continue to soften the appearance of the wall. The ivy produces crimson fall color and the berries are attractive to birds. See the photos below. The vegetation has started to close in on the wall so it seems that 6 plants would be appropriate. He said it would take about two years for the plants to fully cover the wall.

We agreed that 3 more Virginia Creeper could be planted at the top to help fill in the exposed area there. While this area is exposed, Mr. Foss believes that Virginia Creeper planted here would likely do fine.

Also, one dead pine at the bottom should be replaced with a new 10-12 foot white pine.

DRAFT NOTICE OF MODIFICATION

Project Name: The Lodges Landscaping Plan
Project Description: Modification for replacement of landscaping for the retaining wall
Address: 259 Mast Road
Applicant: The Lodges
Property Owner: HSRE Lodges at West Edge, LLC
Landscaper: Elf's Landscaping, c/o Lennie Foss
Zoning District: ORLI
Map and Lot: Map 13, Lot 6-1

The request for a modification has been approved. Six Virginia Creeper plants will be installed at the base of the wall, evenly spaced in the areas where the wall is visually exposed. Three Virginia Creeper plants will be installed at the top of the wall where the wall is visually exposed. One 10-12 foot white pine will be planted to replace the dead pine. These plants will be installed as shown on the approved new landscaping plan ("Blown up view of original plan" at the top). The plants shall be installed by October 1, 2018 but preferably sooner. They shall be maintained in perpetuity.

(See the photographs on the next pages.)



(over)



Juniper:

