



PLANNING BOARD
Town of Ayer
1 Main Street, Ayer, MA 01432
Tel: (978) 772-8220 ext. 144 | Fax: (978) 772-3017 |
Planning@Ayer.MA.US

RECEIVED
OCT 06 2022

TOWN OF AYER
TOWN CLERK

8:30am
(Signature)

October 11, 2022

****6:15 PM****

Open Session Meeting of the Ayer Planning Board
Agenda

Meeting in person at Ayer Town Hall, One Main Street, Ayer, MA

6:15 PM

Call to Order

General Business

Approve Agenda
Covenant/Bond Releases –

Public Hearing, Platt Builders, 'Change of Use' Site Plan Review
for 109 Central Avenue, formerly Ayer Moving and Storage

Continued Public Hearing, Stratton Hill Preliminary Subdivision Plan,
35 lots off of Wright Road

- Discussion of traffic study and peer review comments thereon
- Discussion of conservation issues in general – BSC Group Report
- Discussion of MESA and MEPA permits

Town Planner Update

Meeting Minutes – August 9, 2022

Administrative Announcements

Old Business / New Business

Adjourn

*All meetings are held at Town Hall unless posted otherwise. Order of agenda items may change without notice. Amendments may be made to the agenda to include any emergency or time sensitive material that was unforeseen at the time the agenda was posted. All meetings are subject to video recording.



PLANNING BOARD

Town of Ayer

1 Main Street, Ayer, MA 01432

Tel: (978) 772-8218 | Fax: (978) 772-3017 | Planning@Ayer.MA.US

Ayer Planning Board Application for Site Plan Review

Filing Instructions

In addition to a **complete** application, the applicant must also provide:

1. Sixteen (16) copies of the completed application form and narrative
2. Ten (10) full size copies of the full plan set
3. Six (6) reduced 11X17 copies of the full plan set
4. One (1) electronic copy of the full application including plans
5. Narrative explaining project in detail
6. Certified abutters list (300 feet)
7. Site Plan Application Fee, \$500.00

***Site Plan Review will be scheduled for a Planning Board meeting AFTER all required materials are received and reviewed by the Town Planner. ***

NOTE: There are several sections to this application. Please read the entire application form before proceeding.

1. OWNER/PETITIONER: Side Track Central, LLC Halsey Platt, Manager
Address 109 Central Avenue, Ayer, MA 01432
Telephone 978-857-8801
E-mail Halsey@PlattBuilders.com

2. AGENT FOR OWNER (if applicable): Platt Builders, Inc. Halsey Platt, President
Address 31 Adams Avenue, Groton, MA 01450
Telephone 978-448-9963
E-mail Halsey@PlattBuilders.com

3. PLAN INFORMATION:

Plan Title: Minor Site Plan Review
Revision Date: 8-31-2022
Prepared By: Platt Builders, from Ross Associates' Base Plan
Address: 31 Adams Avenue, Groton, MA 01450
Phone Number: 978-448-9963

REASON FOR SITE PLAN:

Construction, alteration or expansion of, or change in use, within a municipal, institutional, commercial, industrial or multi-family structure.

Construction or expansion of any parking lot for a municipal, institutional, commercial, industrial, or multi-family structure or purpose involving five (5) or more new or additional parking spaces.

Clearing or grading more than 10,000 sq. ft. of land, unless specifically exempt under Section 9.6 of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw.

Any use requiring a special permit, except that where a single-family or two-family dwellings require a special permit, site plan review shall not apply.

All new commercial and industrial construction.

CHECK LIST FOR SUBMISSION

SITE PLAN INFORMATION REQUIRMENTS:

- **Proposed square footage of all proposed and existing buildings:**
 - No change to the footprints of the building
 - Existing square footage of the 2 buildings is 22,624sf
 - We are planning on building a ~3,000sf mezzanine inside one building for added office space – this added space is entirely within the existing building
- **Setback Limits**
 - No change
 - We do not comply with the front or rear setbacks but we propose no change
 - Existing front setback is as small as 1.8' *required is 25'*
 - Existing rear setback is as small as 10.7' *required is 30'*
 - The 2004 planning board approved the current building footprint: April 1, 2004
- **Identify Use**
 - Existing = warehouse/storage for the last 70+ years
 - Proposed for the larger building
 - Woodworking/Cabinetry manufacturing
 - Office space
 - Support space for Platt Builders' residential construction business
 - Proposed for the smaller building – No change
- **Hours of Operation**
 - Cabinetshop ~ 6:30am till 3:30pm – Monday through Friday
 - Offices - ~ 6:30am till 6:30pm – Monday through Friday
- **Number of Employees**
 - 32 employees will be working at this site
 - ~ 10 shop employees (we currently have 6 – looking to add 4 more jobs)
 - ~22 office employees; Platt has another 12 carpenter employees who report directly to jobsites
- **Number of Parking Spaces**
 - Existing striped spaces = 16 car spaces & 10 striped box truck spaces
 - Proposed = 46 car spaces & 2 box truck spaces behind the smaller building
 - We plan to eliminate the angled parking that currently exists and backs out onto Central Avenue. We propose this as parallel parking – parallel to the road and to the building
- **Stormwater Report**
 - We are requesting the planning board to waive this requirement as there are no changes to the building footprint or property grading
 - We did remove (and will not replace) the on-site above-ground fuel oil tank that was on the south side of the building
- **Certified Abutter list**
 - **Coming from the Assessors' office**

- **Table containing area of new or existing buildings proposed and use**
 - Total footprint of buildings: 22,624sf (office is 2 stories)
 - Rear building - ~ 4,400sf - usage to remain the same – storage/warehouse
 - Main building ~ 18,224sf in total as it exists
 - ~2,000sf of offices (2 floors) – to be renovated & used similarly
 - ~ 14,000sf of warehouse space to be used as cabinetry manufacturing
 - ~ 3,000sf of warehouse space to be used as storage for contracting tools
 - We are also proposing to build a new ~3,000sf mezzanine level approximately 14’ above the warehouse floor to serve as added office space above with cabinetry manufacturing below

PLAN REQUIREMENTS

General Information

- Date of Site Plan
- North Arrow
- Title or name of project
- Locational information for the project
- Owner of Record
- Plan Preparer
- Scale
- Locus Map – see separate sheet
- Current Zoning = Light industrial
- Location of all buildings proposed and or existing
- All buildings, property line and or wetland resource area setbacks
- Boundaries for lots, streets, easements, right-of-ways, etc.

Buildings, Structures, and Appurtenances

- **Proposed use and location of all buildings**
 - Existing buildings to remain – no footprint changes
 - Small building – no change of use – warehouse/storage
 - Large building – to be used for woodworking/cabinetry shop, offices, and support space for residential contracting business
- **Proposed grades and structure height**
 - No changes
- **Layout of proposed buildings and structures**
 - No changes
- **Elevations and architectural renderings**
 - We want to cut windows into the top of the concrete block building to accommodate the new mezzanine space we are building
 - See exterior architectural elevations

- Exhibits to indicate the visual impact on the surrounding areas
 - No change except for windows

- Any and all existing non-conformities.
 - No changes to the existing non-conformities
 - Preexisting nonconformities:
 - Front and rear lot line setbacks – see notes above and on plan
 - Lot area coverage – There is currently ~2,510sf of permeable surface – a large planting bed in front of the building – we are going to keep and maintain that planting area – this represents ~ 5.18% of the lot size which is less than the 30% requirement
 - Parking in front of the building

- Detailed signage plans
 - Not yet developed

Table of Zoning Requirements:

	Required	This Site	Changes?	Compliance
	Light			
District	Industry	Light Industry	No change	Yes
Minimum Lot Area	20,000 sf	~ 48,500 sf	No change	Yes
Minimum Lot Frontage	100 lf	525 lf	No change	Yes
Minimum Setback, Side	25 lf	27.9' & 34.1'	No change	Yes
Minimum Setback, Front	25 lf	1.8 lf	No change	No - but existing to remain
Minimum Setback, Rear	30 lf	10.7 lf	No change	No - but existing to remain
Building Height Max Stories	3	2	Adding Mezzanine in Warehouse	Yes
Building Height Max Ft	40 ft	35 ft	No change	Yes
Maximum Building Coverage	50%	46.65%	No change	Yes
Maximum Floor Area Ratio	1.25	0.65	Adding Mezzanine in Warehouse	Yes
Minimum % of open space	30%	5.18%	No change	No - but existing to remain

Landscaping, Open Space, Drainage, Stormwater and Environmental Features

- **We are requesting a waiver from stormwater permitting: We are not making any changes to the pervious/impervious areas of the site – we are not making any changes to the footprint of the building.**
- **Location and square footage of all existing and proposed impervious areas**
 - No change
 - See Plans: there is a ~ 2,510sf area of planting at the front of the building
- **Location of all wetlands, water bodies, wells, one-hundred year storm flood elevation, and all other natural features including streams, drainage channels and other environmental features**
 - No change
 - Building is not in the 100 year flood plane
 - See Plan showing the 100' wetlands setback at the west end of the lot
- **Any and all jurisdictional wetland resource areas**
 - No change
- **Location and description of proposed natural and manmade open space and recreational areas.**
 - No change
- **Location and estimated yield of any groundwater aquifers and well head protection**
 - No change
- **Estimated habitat areas**
 - No change
- **Any and all erosion control measures**
 - We will submit to the Conservation Commission for the asphalt modification at the front entrance of the offices. We want to make the first floor handicapped accessible. We will follow their directive.
- **Location of any hazardous materials**
 - We have met with and will submit to Ayer Fire Department a material storage plan for hazardous/painting materials that will be stored in the building
- **Location of any proposed or existing above or underground storage tanks**
 - We removed the on-site above-ground singled-walled fuel storage tank
 - We will not be replacing it – no on-site fuel storage
- **Location of any existing or proposed septic systems and leach fields**
 - No change - building is on town sewer
- **Location of all soil boring and test pits**
 - None
- **Location and description of all stormwater managements systems**
 - No change
- **Detailed landscaping plan**
 - No change

Utilities

- **Location of all proposed or existing utilities lines either above or underground**
 - No change
 - The larger building electricity is fed from pole #26 across the street
 - The smaller building electricity is fed from pole #28 across the street
- **Location of all proposed or existing utility poles**
 - No change, poles are across the street
- **Location of any fire alarm and terminal boxes**
 - No change
- **Location of any and all fire hydrants**
 - Building has an 8" water main feeding the sprinkler system
 - Hydrant is directly across the street at the corner of Oak Grove Street adjacent to the East corner of the larger building
- **Location of all proposed and or existing water and sewer lines**
 - No change

Vehicular Traffic, Circulation and Parking

We are requesting a waiver from submitting a traffic impact study. Our use will be fewer heavy trucks in and out on a daily basis than Ayer Moving and Storage had and will be more focused on employee vehicles. We are requesting this waiver because we believe that our proposed use will have less of an impact on the neighborhood than the prior use.

- **Traffic flow pattern within the site**
 - Ayer Moving & Storage had up to 20 employees and had 8 large vehicles (Six 26' box trucks, a tractor trailer & cab, a dump truck, etc)
 - Platt Builders as the new tenant will sell all of the vehicles except one 26' box truck – the remainder of our vehicles are typical truck/car vehicles – not the large moving vehicles that have been using the site for ~ 70 years
 - Employee parking will be as shown on the drawing primarily around 3 sides of the larger building as shown on the attached drawing
 - Shipping and receiving will be at the east end of the building where there is a 25' x 80' existing covered overhang, same location AMS used for their in's and out's.
 - Shipping and receiving will be during normal business hours ~ 8am till 4pm Monday through Friday
 - Shipping and receiving traffic will happen in the paved area between the two existing buildings, not on the street
- **Traffic impact statement**
 - There will be more personal car traffic coming and going to the building as we will have more employees (32) and they will be year-round (Ayer Moving & Storage's employee count grew during the summer and reduced during the winter)

- We have clients or architects come to the office once per week – typically with one to three personal vehicles
 - There will be less heavy truck traffic
 - Platt Cabinetry currently receives 4 to 8 deliveries per week
 - Platt Cabinetry currently ships product out once every two weeks
 - We do receive UPS and FedEx package deliveries daily
 - Platt Builders has spent the last 25 years at the end of a residential dead-end street in Groton, MA and we have been good neighbors on this quiet residential street with less than a complain per decade. Central Avenue is a much larger thoroughfare and we do not think that we will have a negative impact on this neighborhood.
- **Number and location of existing and proposed parking spaces**
 - Approved by the Planning Board in 2004 is a plan showing 35 car spaces
 - Existing as striped = 16 car spaces; 13 of which are angled parking to Central Avenue and 10 box truck spaces in front of the small building
 - Proposed = 46 car spaces & 2 box truck spaces behind the smaller building
 - We propose to eliminate the angled parking that backs out onto Central Avenue and replace it with parallel parking along the front of the building
 - We have drawn 9' x 18' parking spaces for our plan

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation and Safety

- **Location and dimensions of any existing or proposed sidewalks**
 - No change – sidewalk is on the opposite side of the street
- **Location and dimensions of any existing or proposed bicycle path**
 - No change – Painted bike lane is on this side of the street
- **Location and rendering of any bicycle storage rack or areas.**
 - None planned at this time
- **Any existing or proposed striping of pedestrian or bicycle lanes**
 - No Change

Outdoor Lighting

- Details on all outdoor lighting
 - The existing large building has wall washer downlights on the Central Avenue side of the building – existing to remain
 - Existing loading bay areas have flood lighting – no proposed changes
 - We do plan to add wall washer lights at the people entrance doors
- Photometric plans for all outdoor lighting
 - We are requesting a waiver from a full photometric plan

6. ANY ADDITIONAL SUBMITTALS AS NEEDED

7. SIGNATURE OF OWNER/PETITIONER _____
Halsey Platt, Manager, Side Track Central, LLC

Date 8/31/2022

8. SIGNATURE OF AGENT FOR OWNER (if applicable)

Halsey Platt, President of Platt Builders

Date 8/31/2022

9. RECEIVED BY THE AYER TOWN CLERK: Date



MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW

109 Central Street Ayer, Mass.
STREET TOWN

Survey work, elevations, dimensions, and base plan by:
David E. Ross Associates, Inc.

6 LANCASTER COUNTY ROAD - P.O. BOX 795 - HARVARD, MASS 01451
(978) 772-6232 FAX 772-6258

Required	This Site	Change?	Compliance
District	Light Industry	No change	Yes
Minimum Lot Area	~48,500 sf	No change	Yes
Minimum Lot Frontage	300 ft	325 ft	Yes
Minimum Setback, Side	25 ft	27' & 34' 5"	Yes
Minimum Setback, Front	25 ft	1.8'	No - but existing to remain
Minimum Setback, Rear	30 ft	10.7 ft	No - but existing to remain
Building Height Max Stories	3	2	Adding Mezzanine in Warehouse
Building Height Max Ft	40 ft	35 ft	No change
Maximum Building Coverage	50%	46.05%	No change
Maximum Floor Area Ratio	1.25	0.63	Adding Mezzanine in Warehouse
Minimum % of open space	30%	5.18%	No - but existing to remain

Platt
Incorporated
Design
Consultants
978.448.9963
31 Adams Avenue
Glen, MA 01450
978.448.9963 Office
978.548.9999 Fax

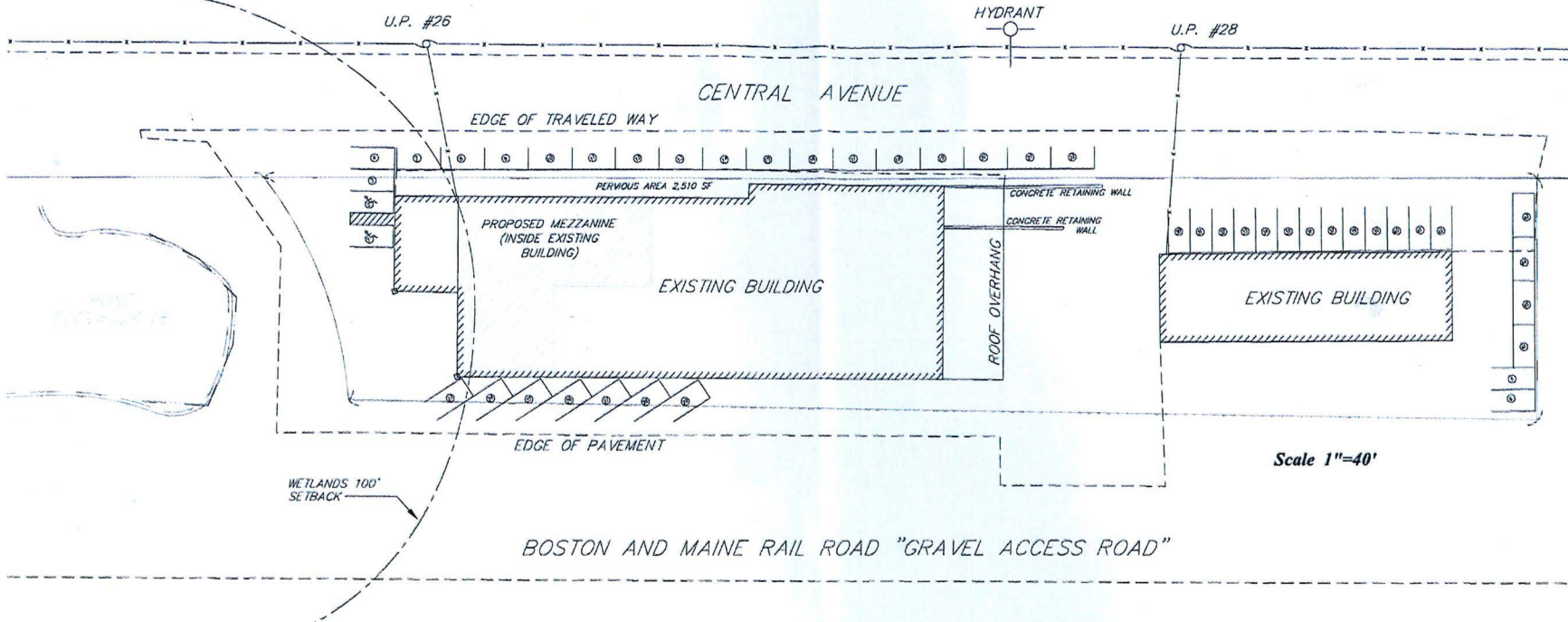
DATE: 08.31.2022
REVISED: 09.13.2022
REVISIONS:
REVISIONS:

JOB NUMBER:
C40-2022

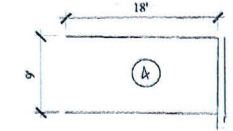
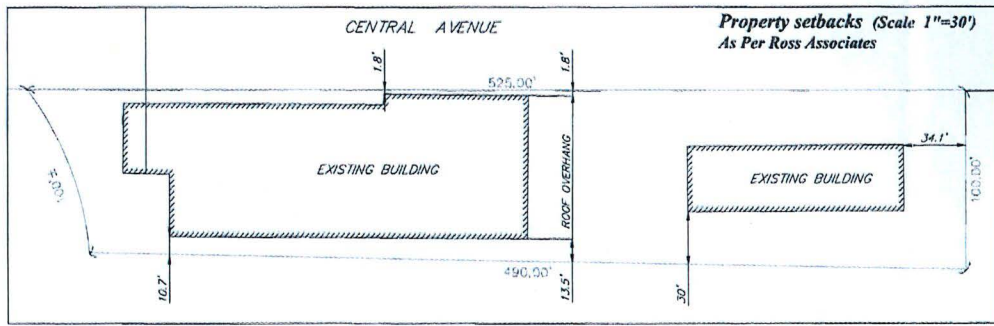
PLATT BUILDERS INC.
109 Central Ave
AYER, MA

MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW
SCALE: AS NOTED

SHEET:
51



Scale 1"=40'

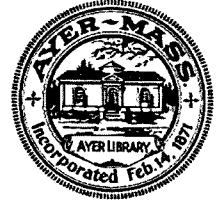


Typical parking dimensions (9'x18')
Parking plan developed by Platt Builders Inc.

PLATT BUILDERS INC. 31 Adams Avenue, Glen, MA 01450. Scale: As Noted. Date: 08/31/2022. Sheet: 51 of 51.

Town of Ayer

Office of the Town Planner



Town of Ayer| Ayer Town Hall| 1 Main Street, 3rd Floor| Ayer, MA 01432|978-772-8218| www.ayer.ma.us

Staff Report

Prepared by Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

Date: October 6, 2022

Site Location / Zoning District(s): 109 Central Avenue / Light Industry

Assessor's Map and Parcel Numbers: Map 27, Lot 109

Tract or Parcel Size Undergoing Development: 48,500 sq.ft. or approximately 1.0 acres

Type of Application: Site Plan review for pre-existing, non-conforming structure / **change of use**

Other Permits needed: Request for Determination of Applicability with the Conservation Commission

Applicant: Side Track Central, LLC / Halsey Platt, Manager

Landowner if different from Applicant: ----

Engineer or Surveyor: David E. Ross, Associates for 'base plan', additional details by Platt Builders

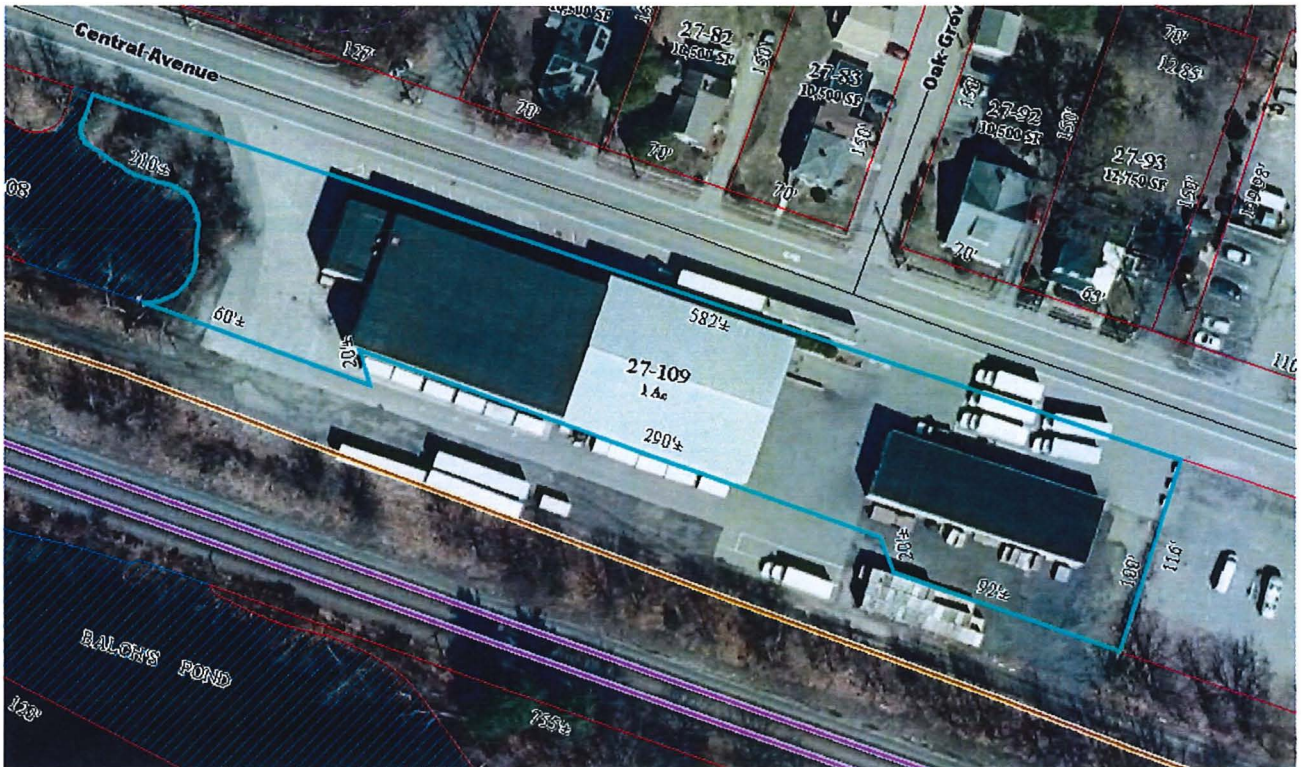
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / KEY POINTS FOR THE PB TO CONSIDER:

Platt Builders desires to relocate from Groton, MA to Ayer, MA and would like to operate out of 109 Central Avenue, the building and site formerly occupied by Ayer Moving and Storage. The Ayer Moving and Storage Building and associated outbuilding was originally built several decades ago. In 2004, the Planning Board approved the current footprint of the large building. This footprint does not meet several of the dimensional requirements of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw, and therefore this proposal falls under "**pre-existing, non-conforming structure**". No expansion, extension or alterations are proposed to the buildings other than installation of lighting fixtures and eventually signage. None of the non-conformities will be increased as a result of this proposal.

I recommend that the Planning Board first accept the application for consideration, and then, after deliberation, approve the application with the general conditions and one special condition that will be discussed at the October 11, 2022 meeting.

I. Project Description and Interdepartmental Review

- a. Location Description and Surrounding Neighborhood (inc. Locus Map from Assessor's Maps and Google Earth)



109 Central Avenue outlined above.

- b. Project Proposal: Platt Builders desires to relocate from Groton, MA to Ayer, MA and would like to operate out of 109 Central Avenue, the building and site formerly occupied by Ayer Moving and Storage. The Ayer Moving and Storage Building and associated outbuilding was originally built several decades ago. In 2004, the Planning Board approved the current footprint of the large building. This footprint does not meet several of the dimensional requirements of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw, and therefore this proposal falls under “**pre-existing, non-conforming structure**”. No expansion, extension or alterations are proposed to the buildings other than installation of lighting fixtures and eventually signage. None of the non-conformities will be increased as a result of this proposal.

The proposed use (**6.2 Enclosed manufacturing, processing, assembly and fabrication**) is an allowed (P) use within the Light Industry zoning district.

The applicant has prepared an extensive summary of their proposed operations in the ‘**Checklist for Submission**’ part of their application which is included in the Planning Board packet. Rather than recap all of that as narrative, I extracted a few key facts that are perhaps most pertinent (next page):

Summary of Key Facts:

- Occupancy of buildings: Woodworking, cabinet manufacturing, office space, storage
- Hours of Operation: Cabinet shop: 6:30 am – 3:30 pm M-F / Offices: 6:30 am – 6:30 pm M-F
- Number of Employees: 32 total on site. 10 shop employees and 22 office employees.
- Parking Spaces required and supplied: Based on the square footage of the large building, which is 17,560 sq.ft. 1 space per 500 sq.ft. (min) = 35 spaces required. 1 space per 300 sq.ft. (max) = 58 spaces required. **46 car spaces are proposed** (including along front of the building on Central Ave.) with 2 spaces for box trucks behind the smaller building. As seen, the proposed number of spaces falls in between the min. and max. number as required in the Ayer Zoning Bylaw. The applicant also notes that “*We plan to eliminate the angled parking that currently exists and backs out onto Central Avenue. We propose this as parallel parking – parallel to the road and the building.*”

c. Reviewer’s Comments:

Fire Department: “Chapter 34 review for adequate fire protection for new occupancy use group.”

Police Department: “None at this time”.

Town Administrator: “Defer to the Planning Board”

Tax Collector / Town Clerk: “No issues”

DPW: “Parallel parking spaces are an improvement and were requested. No comments.”

II. **Applicable Zoning, Site Plan and/or Subdivision Regulations**

- a. Zoning District(s) and Applicable Dimensional Requirements: Light Industry: Min. Lot size is 20,000 sq.ft.; Min. Frontage: 100 feet; Min. Front Setback: 25 feet; Min. Rear Setback: 30 feet; Min. Side Setback: 25 feet.

This pre-existing building and lot **meet** the lot size, frontage and side setback requirements, but **do not** meet the front setback and rear setbacks.

- b. Plan Completeness: I believe the application is complete as long as the following requested waivers are granted by the Planning Board. These waivers are due to the fact that the ‘Site Plan’ being requested is for a ‘pre-existing, non-conforming’ building. The building and lot obviously do not comply with several setbacks and dimensional requirements, and short of moving the building, there is no way to eliminate these non-conformities.

c. Waiver Requests:

1. **Stormwater Report** for Stormwater permitting due to no external changes to the site.
2. **Traffic Study**: “*Our use will be fewer trucks in and out on a daily basis than Ayer Moving and Storage had and will be more focused on employee vehicles. We are requesting this waiver because we believe that our proposed use will have less of an impact on the neighborhood than the prior use*”.

3. Photometric (Lighting) Plan

III. Recommendations

- a. Recommendations for Upcoming Meeting: The Town Planner recommends that the Planning Board first **accept the application** for consideration, followed by a short presentation by the applicant, questions from the Planning Board to the applicant and then comments from abutters and citizens.

- b. Recommended Planning Board action: The Town Planner recommends that the Planning Board **approve** the Site Plan application of Platt Builders, enabling them to locate at 109 Central Avenue.

- c. Recommended Planning Board Findings: The Town Planner recommends that the Planning Board **FIND** that the criteria for Site Plan approval, as described in Section 3.5.4 of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw, have been met for this application.

1.1.1 Decision (actually 3.5.4)

A. The Planning Board shall approve a site plan if it determines that:

1. The site plan meets all applicable requirements of this Bylaw;

2. Given the location, type and extent of land use proposed by the applicant, the design of building form, building location, egress points, grading, and other elements of the site plan could not reasonably be altered to:
 - a. Reduce clearing and grading on the site, or reduce the volume of cut and fill, the number of removed trees, the length of removed or altered stone walls, the area of wetland vegetation displaced, the extent of stormwater flow increase from the site, soil erosion, or threat of air or water pollution,

 - b. Reduce the risk of groundwater contamination from on-site wastewater disposal systems or operations on the premises involving the use, storage, handling, or containment of hazardous substances,

 - c. Improve pedestrian, bicycle or vehicular safety, both on the site and egressing from it,

 - d. Improve access to each structure for fire and other emergency service equipment,

 - e. Reduce visual intrusion by controlling the visibility of parking, storage, or other outdoor service areas viewed from public ways or premises residentially used or zoned,

 - f. Improve building design or scale, or site design, to strengthen compatibility with surrounding properties,

- g. Reduce glare from headlights, reduce light trespass from luminaires onto adjacent lots or the street, or light overspill into the night sky,
- h. Avoid the removal or disruption of historic, traditional or significant structures or architectural elements,
- i. Reduce obstruction of scenic views from publicly accessible locations; and

3. Any variances required from the Board of Appeals have been granted.

B. The Planning Board may impose reasonable site plan approval conditions at the expense of the applicant, including performance guarantees as established under Section 3.5.5 below, to promote these objectives. The Planning Board's conditions shall become binding zoning requirements of the project. Noncompliance with the site plan or the conditions placed on said plan by the Planning Board shall be cause for action by the zoning enforcement officer of the Town of Ayer.

C. The Planning Board may deny a site plan only if the applicant's submission does not include the specific information required to make the determinations under subsection A above.

d. Recommended Planning Board Conditions:

The Town Planner recommends that the normally applicable **GENERAL CONDITIONS**, as amended for this application, be conditions of approval. These will be circulated at the October 11 Planning Board meeting.

As far as **SPECIAL CONDITIONS**, the only one I can think of would be:

1. **Any proposed changes that would increase any of the existing non-conformities of the lot and/or building shall require consultation with the Planning Board prior to such work. The Planning Board may require a site plan amendment or direct the owner to meet with another Board or agency of the Town, if applicable.**

Ref: 9108

October 6, 2022

Mr. Mark Archambault, AICP
Ayer Town Planner
Town Hall
One Main Street
Ayer, MA 01432

Re: Responses to Traffic Peer Review Comments – Stratton Hill Residential Development
Ayer, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Archambault:

Vanasse & Associates, Inc. (VAI) hereby provides responses to comments raised in the September 2, 2022 *Transportation Peer Review* letter prepared by Nitsch Engineering in reference to their review of the December 2021 *Transportation Impact Assessment* (the “Initial TIA”) prepared by VAI in support of the proposed Residential Development to be located off Wright Road in Ayer, Massachusetts (hereafter referred to as the “Project”). Due to the expansion in the study area, VAI has provided an Updated TIA to address comments related to the base data of the Initial TIA. For ease of review, the peer review comments are provided in bold followed by our response.

Nitsch Engineering
September 2, 2022

Comment 1: *Nitsch feels that the Applicant should clarify the discrepancy in the project program.*

Response: The Project proposes the development of 168± acres of land into 33 single-family homes and four duplex units. Off-street parking will be provided for a minimum of two (2) vehicles per unit in individual driveways and garages. This has been revised in the Updated TIA.

Comment 2: *Nitsch agrees with the selected Study Area. However, based on conversations with the Town, we request that Cavin Street and the intersection of Calvin Street at Snake Hill Road to be included in the study.*

Response: As per Nitsch and the Town’s request, the study area was expanded to include the intersection of Calvin Street at Snake Hill Road. Please see the updated TIA.

Comment 3: *After discussions with the Town, Nitsch believes that the intersection of Calvin Street at Snake Hill Road needs to be included in the counts. Also, the TMCs were collected off-season and do not include vehicular and pedestrian traffic associated with Sandy Pond Beach. Similarly, in the absence of ATRs, how can the peak traffic periods be verified? At the request of the Town this issue was relayed to the Applicant prior to this review, so they can conduct new counts (ATRs and TMCs) before the end of the summer season (Labor Day weekend).*

Response: As per Nitsch and the Town's request, the study area was expanded to include the intersection of Calvin Street at Snake Hill Road and new TMCs were conducted before the end of the summer season (Labor Day weekend). In addition, the intersection of Standish Avenue with Wright Road was also counted. The TMCs were conducted on Thursday, August 25, 2022 during the weekday morning (7:00 to 9:00 AM) and weekday evening (4:00 to 6:00 PM) peak periods. TMCs were also conducted on Saturday, August 27, 2022 during the midday (11:00 AM to 2:00 PM) peak period, as per the Town's request.

It is important to note that the critical traffic activities in a residential neighborhood are likely to occur during a weekday morning between 7:00 to 9:00 AM, when residents are traveling to work, and during the weekday evening between 4:00 and 6:00 PM, when residents are expected to arrive return work. The time periods analyzed in the TIA were selected as they are representative of the peak-traffic-volume hours for both the proposed Project and the adjacent roadway network.

Comment 4: *The capacity analysis shall be reconducted during the existing, no-build, and build conditions to reflect the new traffic volumes at the previously counted intersections and the additional volumes obtained at Calvin Street and Snake Hill Road.*

Response: The analysis was updated with new traffic counts conducted. Please see the updated TIA.

Comment 5: *For mitigation measures, Nitsch requests that the applicant discuss physical conditions and recommended road improvements at Wright Road, spot upgrades on street network in project vicinity, applicable lower intensity improvements, and a cost estimate for each improvement alternative.*

- **Wright Road – Physical Conditions and Recommended Road Improvements:**

Wright Road is in poor condition, and the increased traffic generated by the Stratton Hill subdivision will likely exacerbate this.

1. *How traffic generated from the subdivision will likely impact the road surface, and what improvements to Wright Road should be made, if any, to increase its ability to handle the increased traffic volumes. Provide graphic sketches for Wright Road improvements under the Subdivision Regulations, within the physical limitations of the right-of-way.*
2. *Provide cost estimates at a broadly conceptual level.*

Response: The traffic volumes from the development are minimal, residential in nature, and not anticipated to affect the road surface on Wright Road in a manner unlike existing traffic on the roadway. Intersection delays are indicated to be minimal under Existing through Build conditions, substantiating the effect of the project on the transportation system as minor. No improvements to Wright Road as a result of the project traffic volumes are necessary.

- **Spot Upgrades on Street Network in Project Vicinity:**

Identify concepts for offsite roadway improvements, as well as other mitigation measures, that might be justified because of traffic impacts from the proposed Stratton Hill subdivision to Wright Road and to the adjacent road network, as



indicated in the preceding narrative and suggested traffic count locations. Provide general cost indicators for such improvements; and

Response: See previous response. Both existing volumes and proposed traffic volumes from the development are minor in nature and represent vehicle flow rates of one vehicle every one to two minutes during peak hours.

- **Lower Intensity Improvements:**

Identify and provide graphic sketches for other potential improvements that might enhance public safety without major road construction such as signs, pavement markings, sight distance maintenance measures, traffic calming measures, or actions of a similar nature, referred to as “lower intensity improvements.” Provide general cost indicators for lower intensity improvements.

Response: See previous response. Appropriate signage exists at area intersections. Snake Hill Road and Wright Road are both posted for 25 mph, which is an appropriate speed limit for these roadways and observations are that many drivers travel at a lower speed. The STOP-sign on the Snake Hill Road southbound approach to the Wright Road intersection is located approximately 65 feet in advance of the intersection. While this placement would diminish the effectiveness of the sign in a more heavily trafficked area, counts indicate a minimal volume of between 3 and 6 vehicles (total of both directions) during the three peak hours studied on this segment of the road and therefore minimal traffic activity.

However, the Applicant is willing to provide a monetary contribution to the Town for the purposes of traffic calming devices such as solar-powered signs enhanced with flashing LEDs at the crosswalk over Sandy Pond Road or signage for other locations in the study area.

Comment 6: *Nitsch feels it’s pertinent for the Applicant to provide information on parking generation and proposed parking supply.*

Response: As part of this Project, off-street parking will be provided for a minimum of two (2) vehicles per unit in individual driveways and garages. The proposed parking supply is consistent with the minimum parking requirements of Section 9.1.2 Required Off-Street Parking Spaces, from the Town of Ayer Zoning Ordinance. See the Updated TIA.

Comment 7: *Nitsch requests that the applicant discuss any on-site accommodation features to be provided for the development.*

Response: It should be noted that the Project is a development of primarily single-family homes with a small number of duplex units. As such, on-site accommodation of vehicle and bicycle parking, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and loading and delivery operations will be addressed through the internal roadway and driveways for the residential homes.

Comment 8: *Nitsch requests that the applicant discuss any TDM measures proposed.*

Response: In order to promote healthy transportation choices and to minimize the Project impact, a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategy was developed and will help to encourage future residents to use alternative modes of transportation. Please see updated TIA.



Mr. Mark Archambault, AICP
October 6, 2022
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Comment 9: *Nitsch requests that the applicant discuss any construction impacts as it relates to trucking routes, equipment staging, and anticipated roadway impacts.*

Response: Prior to the construction period, the applicant will submit a Construction Management Plan consistent with local, state and federal guidelines. This plan will be developed in coordination with Town staff, including Planning, Building Inspector, Department of Public Works, and Police and Fire Departments, and will be prepared prior to the start of construction of the Project.

We trust that the above satisfactorily addresses the comments and if you should have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

VANASSE & ASSOCIATES, INC.



Scott W. Thornton, P.E.
Principal

cc: Moulton Construction Company
R. Collins, Attorney at Law