



**TOWN OF COVENTRY, RI
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

STAFF REPORT

Project Name:	Proscape Landscaping
Project Type:	Development Plan Review
Plan Review Phase:	Amended Development Plan Review (Preliminary/Final Plan)
Applicant/Owner:	Backstreet Holdings
Address:	2043 Maple Root Road
Plat / Lot / Zone:	AP 10 Lot 40.11 Zone GB1 Lot Size 5.29 Acres
Existing Use:	Landscaping Business
Proposed Use:	Landscaping Business
Description:	The applicant proposes to amend its previously-approved Preliminary/Final Plan DPR application to relocate a stormwater retention basin and to extend a double-row of plantings along its shared property line with.

Background

This matter comes before the Planning Commission as a Major Amendment to a Development Plan Review (Preliminary/Final Plan) submission for the Proscape Landscaping project located at 2043 Maple Root Road (AP 10, Lot 40.11).

The project received Development Plan Review approval at the Planning Commission's November 15, 2023 meeting; recording occurred on December 22, 2023. The proposed 9,000 SF building containing space for offices, shops, storage, and a garage has since been constructed and the business has begun to operate out of it, but site work remains ongoing.

The applicant emailed Planning staff on November 8, 2024 to discuss its intent to relocate a stormwater retention basin to better accommodate staging. After further review, and by virtue of the need for the project to secure a RIDPES Permit Modification (dated February 3, 2025), Staff advised the applicant that per Article VI, Section B.3. of the Subdivision Regulations, the proposed alteration to the site's drainage/stormwater design would be categorized as a "Major Change" to the Final Plan application, and therefore would require approval from the Planning Commission.

Site and Existing Conditions

The subject parcel, identified as A.P. 10, Lot 40.11, is approximately 5.29 acres in size; is zoned GB-1 (General Business); and is surrounded by a mix of Commercial and Residential uses. Although the parcel has frontage on Maple Root Road, Harkney Hill Road, and Nooseneck Hill Road, site access will only occur via Nooseneck Hill Road. No wetlands exist on the lot; the site lies within Zone “X” (defined as area outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplain) of the National Flood Insurance Maps for the Town of Coventry.

Of the full proposal which was approved in late 2023, only the 9,000 SF commercial building with interior spaces for offices, a shop, a garage, and storage has been constructed. Outdoor storage for landscaping materials, trucks, and equipment remains informal as the applicant awaits a decision on its request to relocate a stormwater basin.

Note that in recent weeks, Planning staff and the applicant have discussed the commercial building’s white color as it relates to § 255-V-530F(2) of the Zoning Code, which states that “Facade colors shall be low-reflective, subtle, neutral or earth-tone colors.” Staff understands the applicant intends to address this topic during the meeting.

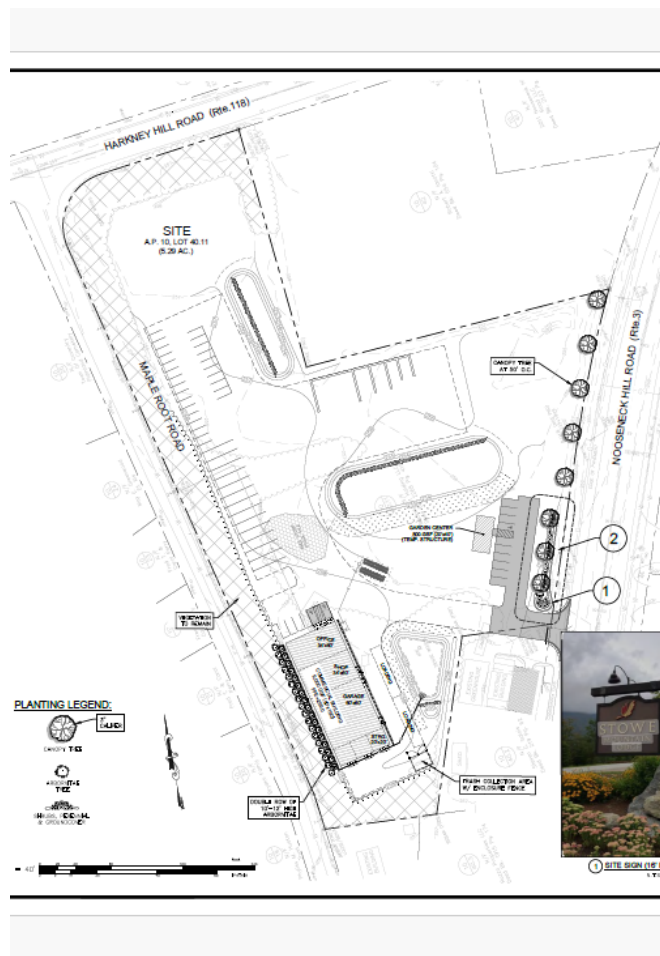


Proscape building viewed from south, on Maple Root Road

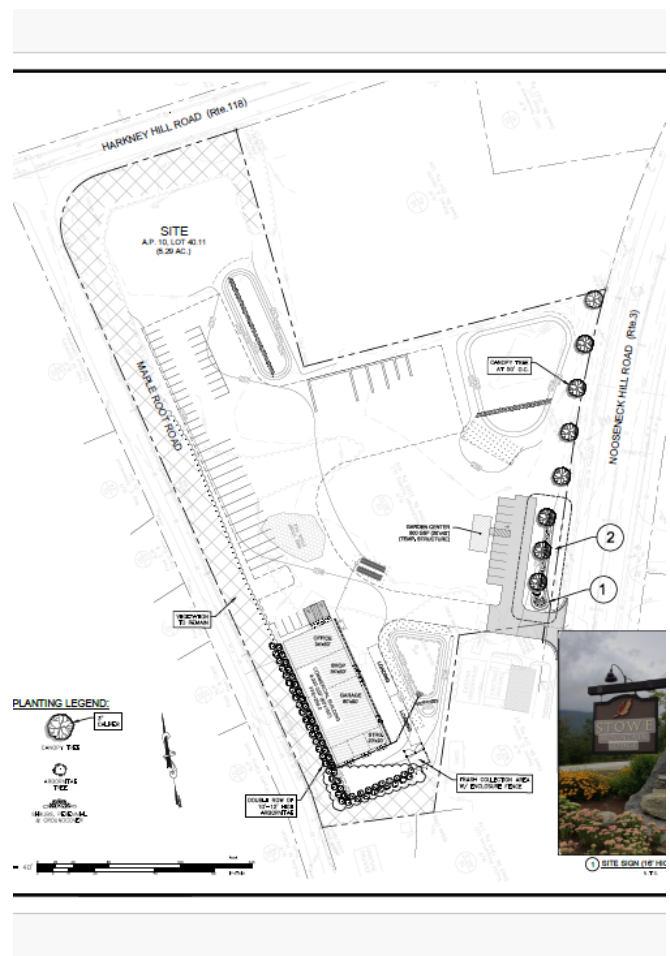
Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to amend its record plan to relocate a drainage basin and to extend the double-row of arbor vitae plantings to screen the building along its shared property line with AP 10, Lot 40.12. The drainage basin relocation facilitates the applicant's ability to use that area of the site for staging; the extension of plantings was a request from Planning staff to ensure the residential abutter to the south would enjoy the same benefits of screening as the neighbors on the other side of Maple Root Road will.

The landscape plan excerpts below provide a convenient visual comparison of how the site layout would change as a result of the proposed amendment.



November 2023 (previously approved)



April 2025 (proposed amendments)

Zoning

As previously stated, the subject parcel is located in the General Business 1 (GB-1) Zoning District. The Table below illustrates the minimum lot requirements, lengths, widths and areas for each of the proposed lots.

TABLE 6-2

General Business 1	MINIMUM LOT		MINIMUM SETBACK (feet)				MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE
	Area	Frontage	Front	Side	Corner Side	Rear	
	43,560 SF	200 ft	10	10	10	40	

TABLE 6-3

General Business 1	MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT (feet)		ACCESSORY BUILDING		MINIMUM DISTANCE OF STRUCTURE FROM RESIDENTIAL ZONE BUILDING
	Principle	Accessory	Side	Rear	
	35	15	10	10	

The previously-approved Development Plan Review proposal was designed to comply with the minimum dimensional requirements of the GB-1 Zone, and the proposed amendments are likewise in conformance with those standards. No variances are needed. Waivers were previously granted for sidewalks and curbing, as such infrastructure was not already present at the time of development and would be isolated from the existing sidewalk/curbing network.

Approvals

Aside from the Planning Commission's approval, this amended Development Plan Review (Preliminary/Final) application required a RIDPES Permit Modification, which was received as discussed in a letter dated February 3, 2025.

Inter-Departmental Review and Comments

Planning Staff received the following comments regarding this application through Inter-Departmental Review:

1. Joseph Levesque, P.E., Town Engineer, via email dated April 17, 2025

"Engineering has reviewed the amended BMP-2 basin plans dated 11/8/24 and offer no comment."

Development Plan Review - Findings

As this matter constitutes a “Major Change” to a previously-approved Development Plan Review application, the Planning Commission is tasked with conducting its review and making Findings of Fact in accordance with Article 16 of the Zoning Ordinance as it existed when the original DPR (Preliminary/Final) application came before it in November 2023. As the proposed amendments concern only two elements of the overall development concept, and certain required findings do not pertain to those elements, text in **blue** represent findings which have not changed as a result of new information relative to the proposed plan amendments, while text in **red** represents findings which did pertain to the proposed amendments and therefore have been updated.

ART. 16	REQUIREMENT	DEPARTMENT ANALYSIS/FINDINGS
§1640B	<p>The development shall be integrated into the existing terrain and surrounding landscape, and shall be designed to protect abutting properties and community amenities. Building sites shall, to the extent feasible:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimize use of wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, hilltops; 2. Minimize obstruction of scenic view from publicly accessible locations; 3. Preserve unique natural or historical features; 4. Minimize tree, vegetation and soil removal, grade changes and subsequent erosion; 5. Maximize open space retention; 6. Landscape and screen objectionable features from neighboring properties and roadways pursuant to Article 17; and 7. Prevent depletion or degradation of public drinking water supplies by employing best management practices for erosion control, storm water management, wastewater disposal and landscaping. 	<p>Consistent with the standards established in the Subdivision Regulations, the applicant proposed to extend the double-row of 10’ to 12’ arborvitae trees to provide a buffer between the new commercial structure and the residential abutters directly to the south and east. The arborvitae buffer will also extend along the full length of the existing building’s Maple Root Road frontage for similar screening purposes.</p>

§1640C	<p>Architectural style shall be in harmony with the prevailing character and scale of buildings in the neighborhood and the Town through use of appropriate building materials, screening, breaks in roof and wall lines and other architectural techniques. Variation in detail, form and siting shall be used to provide visual interest and to avoid monotony. Proposed buildings shall relate harmoniously to each other with adequate light, air, circulation, and separation between buildings.</p>	<p>As previously noted, the issue of building color was discussed between Staff and the applicant in recent weeks, and the applicant intends to address this issue during the meeting</p> <p>Color aside, the architectural style of the 9,000 SF. commercial building complements that of the abutting Salois nursery building and displays attention to the provisions of Section 255-V-530 of the Zoning Code, which concerns the Special Planning Overlay District.</p>
§1640D	<p>The development shall be served with adequate water supply and waste disposal systems. For structures to be served by on-site waste disposal systems, the applicant shall submit a septic system design prepared by a Registered Professional Engineer or Registered Land Surveyor, as applicable.</p>	<p>Water is available to the subject parcel. The applicant has provided its OWTS permit with its overall submittal.</p>
§1640E	<p>The development plan shall maximize the convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site and in relation to adjacent ways (see Article 12). The plan shall describe estimated average daily and peak hour vehicle trips to be generated by the site and traffic flow patterns for vehicles and pedestrians showing adequate access to and from the site and adequate circulation within the site.</p>	<p>Ingress and egress will be provided via Nooseneck Hill Road only (no site access from Maple Root Rd or Harkney Hill Rd). The applicant has submitted a letter explaining its request to construct a driveway opening with 20-foot turning radii (instead of 15 feet). The applicant also provided a Traffic Statement letter which states that no adverse impacts to traffic conditions are anticipated from this project. RIDOT accepted this Statement and has granted preliminary approval of the applicant's</p>

§1640F	The development plan shall show adequate measures to prevent pollution of surface or groundwater, to minimize erosion and sedimentation in conformance with Chapter 5, Article III - Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, of the Code of Ordinances of the Town, and to prevent changes in groundwater levels, increased runoff and potential for flooding. Drainage shall be designed so that runoff shall not be increased, groundwater recharge shall be maximized, and neighboring properties shall not be adversely affected;	RIDEM has issued a RIPDES Permit Modification for the proposed relocation of the stormwater drainage basin. Strict adherence to the modified permit received by RIDEM and that of the Town Engineer will be required in order to ensure the prevention of surface or groundwater pollution.
§1640G	The development will not place excessive demands on Town services and infrastructure;	The plan does not appear to place excessive stress on Town services and infrastructure.
§1640H	Electric, telephone, cable TV, and other such utilities shall be underground where physically and environmentally feasible;	Overhead wires are already existing in the project area. Connection will be coordinated with the appropriate utility company.
§1640I	Exposed storage areas, machinery, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures and other service uses shall be set back or screened to protect the abutters from objectionable features;	The proposed extension of arborvitae plantings will ensure additional screening for the abutters to the east and south.
§1640J	The development plan shall comply with all zoning requirements for landscaping (Article 17) parking and loading (Article 12), dimensions (Article 6), industrial performance standards (Article 7), and all other provisions of this Ordinance.	The proposed amendments will not impact the project's compliance with Zoning requirements for landscaping as well as parking and loading spaces.

Recommendation

Staff finds the proposed Development Plan Review amendment consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in Article 16 of the Town of Coventry's Zoning Code as it existed in November 2023, when the original decision was made. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and **approve** the amended Development Plan Review application, subject to the conditions denoted below:

Conditions of approval

1. Consistent with the amended plans, the applicant shall provide a 10- to 12-foot high vegetated buffer comprised of “Green Giant” arborvitae trees, planted in a staggered double-row configuration, behind the 9,000 SF commercial building and paralleling the shared property line with AP 10, Lot 40.12 to ensure all residential abutters are adequately screened from the commercial development. These plantings shall occur no later than six months after the date of recording of this decision.
2. Signage shall either be designed so as to comply with all dimensional standards contained in the Zoning code or will require the applicant to specify and seek the required relief prior to installation.
3. The parking area associated with the 800 SF sales structure shall consist of asphalt and not permeable pavement.
4. Upon project completion, a Certificate of Conformance (COC) from the Engineer of Record (EOR) shall be required. The COC shall certify that the constructed project meets all required standards, regulations and specifications in the permitting and construction documents. The COC shall be focused on site civil related work. Work includes, but is not limited to; all drainage system components, earth grading, roadway subbase, pavement and curbing, concrete flatwork, underground utilities (sewer, electric, water, etc.), survey markers and monuments, fire cisterns, signage, fencing and landscaping. EOR shall partner with a qualified sub-consultant to perform necessary inspection related duties if EOR does not perform these duties in-house. All coordination between EOR and inspection sub-consultant shall be finalized before construction commences. A certificate of occupancy will not be issued until COC is received and accepted by the town.

Pursuant to Article XII. Appeals, Subsection A. Procedure for Appeals to the Board of Appeal of the Coventry Subdivision Regulations, the decision of the Planning Commission herein may be appealed in writing by any party aggrieved by said decision to the Coventry Board of Appeal. Any such appeal shall be made within 20 days of the day of the decision is recorded and posted in the Town Clerk's Office.