

What is the Prospect and Ferris Redevelopment Plan?

The Town has prepared a redevelopment plan for the properties owned by James Ward at the corner of Prospect Street and Ferris Place. The redevelopment plan specifies the development standards for the properties. The plan calls for development of the site with up to 64 apartments, 1,000 square feet maximum for a café or retail shop, and the preservation of the 18th century home at 112 Ferris Place and its reuse as an educational and cultural amenity space (which may not be used for private parties or events).

This redevelopment plan has been introduced by ordinance, is scheduled for review by the Planning Board, and is also scheduled for a public hearing at the December 7 meeting of the Mayor and Council. The redevelopment plan sets the development standards for the property, it is not an approval to begin construction.

If the redevelopment plan is approved, there are still multiple steps that must occur before construction may start. First, a redeveloper agreement between the developer and Town must be executed. Next, an application for site plan approval must be made to the Planning Board and approved by the Board. Then, of course construction permits would be required.

Does adoption of the Redevelopment Plan equate to “spot zoning”?

No. Spot zoning includes a change in zoning which is inconsistent with a municipality’s Master Plan. The Prospect and Ferris Redevelopment Plan includes a section describing how the Redevelopment Plan is consistent with and effectuates the Town’s Master Plan.

Aren’t 64 apartments too much for this site?

The Town carefully considers permitted densities when looking at its zoning requirements. Also 64 apartments may seem like a lot, it is actually a lower residential density than the Westfield Arms just a bit further up Prospect Street. Although Westfield Arms has 40 apartments, its residential density is about 90 apartments per acre, where the Prospect/Ferris project would be about 67 apartments per acre.

When the Planning Board was preparing the Town’s Master Plan Reexamination Report in 2019, and then an update to the Master Plan Land Use Element adopted this past June, it identified the properties at Prospect and Ferris for a possible rezoning and their redevelopment in a way that would further the Town’s vision. Why did they? The public feedback received during creation of those documents included a desire for a wider range of housing options within walking distance to downtown, and the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties.....the properties at Prospect and Ferris fit the bill.

Why does the plan allow for additional retail or café space?

The Town Master Plan recommends that any redevelopment plan for downtown Westfield take into a consideration the potential for ground floor retail uses at appropriate locations. The inclusion of retail or café space on the project site will tie the development in with the remainder of the downtown by encouraging pedestrian movement from the core downtown area to the site and its cultural amenity space. The plan does limit the square footage of retail and café space and any combination of same to 1,000 square feet.

The Redevelopment Plan allows for a building height of 4 stories or 50 feet in height? How does this compare to other buildings in Westfield?

Property	Height
Arcanum Hall	51 feet to the top of turret/3 stories
Savannah	48.5 feet from grade at the corner of the building nearest East Broad Street/4 stories
62-70 Elm Street	48 feet/4 stories
Westfield Arms	50 feet/5 stories
Carleton Arms	52 feet/5 stories

In addition, the Town Master Plan recommends an increase in the permitted building heights in downtown Westfield to 4 stories/55 feet.

Are the setbacks proposed appropriate for the building size proposed?

In downtown environments including downtown Westfield, buildings are typically built to the front property line. This brings storefronts to the sidewalk encouraging pedestrian interest and physical interaction with ground floor commercial spaces.

The redevelopment plan also includes detailed design standards which require that buildings be articulated, providing visual interest and ensuring that long monotonous building frontages are not constructed.

How does the coverage proposed compare to other areas?

The adjacent zone districts which permit mixed-use development, the CBD and GB-1 zone districts, do not contain maximum coverage restrictions.

During the Master Plan Reexamination, didn't Westfielders not view multi-family housing favorably?

The Master Plan Reexamination notes that, "While residents are in favor of housing affordability and recognize the need for smaller sized housing units such as apartments, the

multi-family residential housing type is not desired.” The Master Plan further explains, however, that residents are more in favor of mixed-use developments and that Westfield should encourage mixed-use developments. Survey respondents on average had the second highest positive approval ratings for mixed-uses behind single-family development.

In addition to combining uses in the same building, mixed-use developments are typically pedestrian-oriented places with uninterrupted pedestrian connections and public amenities. This may be one reason why in Westfield, mixed use buildings are perceived more positively by the public than multi-family apartments.

The Prospect and Ferris Redevelopment Plan calls for a mixed-use building including not only residential units but also a cultural space, and retail or café space.

How does the parking requirement for this development compare to nearby developments?

Parking requirements for The Savannah, The Parker, The Claremont, and 440 North Avenue, are based on the NJ Residential Site Improvement Standards and are as follows:

Unit Size	Parking Requirement
1 bedroom	.8 spaces per unit
2 bedroom	1.3 spaces per unit
3 bedroom	1.9 spaces per unit

The Redevelopment Plan includes a residential parking requirement of 1.5 spaces per unit, which equates to 96 parking spaces required for the 64 dwelling units possible under maximum permitted buildout. A parking requirement of 1.5 spaces per unit is actually higher than the Master Plan transportation consultant’s recommendation of 1.35 spaces per unit. The consultant recommended this figure after an analysis of downtown parking ratios in similar transit oriented development communities in New Jersey, reports from NJ Transit, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, and Urban Land Institute.

Is there data on how many cars residents who live in nearby redevelopments actually have?

As part of the Unified Land Use and Circulation Element of the Master Plan, the Planning Board’s transportation consultant examined downtown parking ratios. In 2020, the transportation consultant surveyed parking supply and demand for the Claremont (333 Central), the Savannah, and then a number of developments in other NJ communities such as Cranford, Metuchen, Berkeley Heights.

Results:

The Claremont parking demand is 1.16 parking spaces per unit.

The Savannah parking demand is .91 parking spaces per unit.

Where is the parking for the cultural space? Will there be parking underground set aside for these events?

Educational and cultural facilities can exhibit a wide range of characteristics based on community needs and specific use. Consequently, the Redevelopment Plan sets forth a two-step process for establishing the specific programming of the cultural space and, by extension, the potential parking need. This process was designed to account for the varied nature of educational and cultural spaces.

First, the Plan includes use parameters for the space. The Redevelopment Plan requires it to be a non-profit facility with accessibility to the public at regularly scheduled hours or by appointment. The Plan also prohibits the space from being used to host private parties or special events.

Second, the Plan requires that any redeveloper submit a Historic Reuse plan for the space. Specifically, the Plan states: "Any Redevelopment Agreement adopted in furtherance of this Redevelopment Plan shall also include a Historic Reuse Plan, which shall identify, at minimum, cultural and educational activities which will take place in the House, potential partners for programming and operating the House, and plan for public accessibility (i.e., hours of operation and procedure for making appointments)." The requirement of a Historic Reuse Plan will ensure that the programming for the facility and the corresponding needs can be determined in partnership with the Town and stakeholders. This provides the ability to best schedule operating times to avoid conflict with peak parking demand periods and to most efficiently utilize parking resources.

What parking is set-aside for the retail café and cultural center?

Parking spaces on the property not occupied by residential uses may be utilized for the non-residential uses.

Will on-street parking be permitted on Prospect Street in front of the building contemplated by the Redevelopment Plan?

The Redevelopment Plan does not contemplate or permit on-street parking on Prospect Street in front of the building.

Where will construction vehicles park during the construction?

As part of the project construction, a staging plan will be worked out with the Building Department, Town Engineer, and Police Department. Given the scope of the project, construction vehicles will likely be stored off-site once the foundation is completed.

Does the Town require solar panels for major developments?

Solar panels are one tool that can be utilized in creating green developments. The Town has adopted a Sustainable Land Use Pledge and the Redevelopment Plan is consistent with that pledge. The pledge calls for a mix of land uses, housing options, and green design. Specifically for green design, the Prospect and Ferris Redevelopment Plan calls for a green roof of at least 8,000 square feet in size to be designed in accordance with Westfield's Stormwater Management Ordinance. In addition, law requires that electric vehicle infrastructure requirements be installed.

How will traffic concerns be addressed?

Per the redevelopment plan, the completion of a Traffic Impact Study is required for this project. This study must be completed prior to and made part of a redeveloper agreement between the Town and the developer. The purpose of the study is to assess impact on traffic patterns, and determine if additional infrastructure improvements will be necessary because of it. Any improvements necessary would be made a component of the Town's redeveloper agreement with a developer.

The Redevelopment Plan includes, at a minimum, that the following intersections be included:

- Ferris Place and Prospect Street
- Ferris Place and Clark Street
- Prospect Street and East Broad Street

Feedback received has made clear that the intersection of Clark Street and North Avenue must be studied. The governing body has the ability to have this intersection included in any completed Traffic Impact Study.

When is the traffic study scheduled?

Traffic studies include surveys of peak periods (usually during weekday rush hours) as well as weekend hours. In cases where the study area is near or adjacent to a school, school opening and dismissal times are also included.

When will final decisions be made and will we have opportunities to promote our views before such decision?

The first opportunity comes during the public hearing scheduled for potential adoption of the redevelopment plan. This is scheduled for the December 7, 2021 meeting of the Mayor and Council. The next key milestone would be a Redevelopment Agreement between the Town and Redeveloper. As noted above, this Redevelopment Agreement would include information about the reuse of the historic structure and a Traffic Impact Study. After the Redevelopment Agreement, the next opportunity would come when a site plan application is filed with the Planning Board, and a public hearing is held on that application. Public notice would be given

for that application by publication of a notice in the local newspaper and mailing of notice via certified mail to all property owners within 200 feet of the properties subject of the application.

How can this redevelopment be considered in the absence of the anticipated plan for redevelopment at the other end of Ferris Place (ex-Lord & Taylor property)? Are we looking at another large scale 4-5 story building on that site in a few more years just a block away?

The Town takes a holistic approach to planning. When completing the Unified Land Use and Circulation Element of the Master Plan, the Planning Board anticipated the potential development of both the Prospect and Ferris Properties and Lord and Taylor properties. A specific plan for the Lord and Taylor property has not yet been created, but the Town Master Plan envisions the Lord and Taylor property being redeveloped with a mix of office and residential use, with potentially a greater number of stories than the rest of downtown Westfield. Exactly what uses and what height limitations are put forward is still to be determined.